SEXISM AND 2020
JOAN WALSH

ANNA WIENER'S *UNCANNY VALLEY*
KEVIN LOZANO

THE Nation.

FEBRUARY 10, 2020

Australia Is Burning

The country's climate crisis has clearly reached a tipping point. But it could go either way.

DANIEL JUDT

1B
Animals killed, with more than 100 threatened species at risk from habitat destruction

400M
Tons of CO_2 released (equivalent to more than 70 percent of Australia's total 2018 emissions)

26M
Acres burned across six states

420K
Fires that raged across the country in December 2019; by January their smoke had circled the earth

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VISIT…

LANZAROTE
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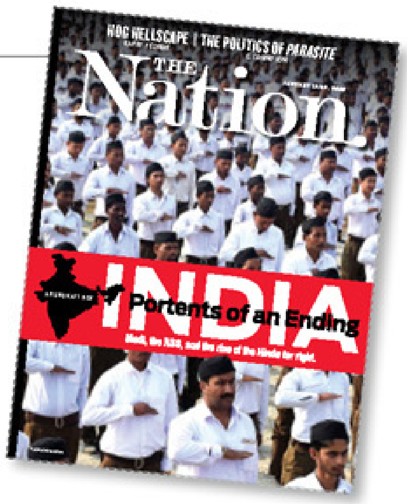

Letters

@thenation.com

Impeachment Is an Inside Job

I enjoy Jeet Heer's articles for *The Nation*, but his argument in "Impeachment Needs to Move to the Streets" [December 30/January 6] threw me. Impeachment, according to our Constitution, which is the foundation of our laws, rests not with the masses but with Congress. The rule of law determines not only what is legal or illegal but also how that determination is made. Due process is at the heart of the law. That other countries govern through mass protest is their affair but not our procedure.

Protest in the United States works, but not in the streets. It works at the ballot box. Instead of advocating going to the streets, why didn't Heer suggest that citizens express their convictions to their elected members of Congress? They alone make individual decisions based on many factors, which should not include mass protests in the streets any more than party loyalty—neither of which is a constitutional remedy.

Also, criticizing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for insisting on scrupulous attention to the rule of law seemed to this longtime reader neither justified nor fair.

John Steel
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

Lessons in Free Tuition

Re "The Free College Try" by Bryce Covert [January 13/20]: When I graduated from the City University of New York's Brooklyn College in 1975, I had not paid a cent in tuition. All we paid was a $35 consolidated fee (and we joked that it was too much) for access to the student center and fitness facilities. I don't know what that $35 is in today's dollars, but for comparison, I paid $400 for a course at New York University that I needed to take in order to graduate but was closed out of at Brooklyn College.

A sociologist at the time astutely observed that access to higher education was the conveyor belt that carried each generation to the next level of society. Indeed, my sister, cousins, and I were the children of a postal worker, a fireman, a printer, housewives, and office workers. We moved into the professional class, and today we are teachers, veterinarians, an accountant, a chiropractor, a nurse, an artist, a psychologist, and a (real!) rocket scientist.

Free public college is not a fairy tale. It is history, apparently long forgotten.

Jacquelyn Bergstein, PhD
BROOKLYN

The Great Picasso Con

When I was in art school 50 years ago, I was often bewildered by some of the artists who had gained fame because of their "genius." Top of the list for me was Pablo Picasso. I simply could not understand why he was considered so great. I found his work ugly. I never knew anything about his personal life and did not care to.

When I read Jillian Steinhauer's review of *Life With Picasso* ["Fire and Brimstone," January 13/20], the new book by Picasso's onetime partner Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, it confirmed what I've felt all these many years: Picasso truly was a genius—not as a visual artist but as a con artist.

Cris Arbo
BUCKINGHAM, VA.

The GOP's Unhealthy Agenda

💬 Re Bryce Covert's "The Medicaid Expansion Effect" [December 30/January 6]: If greater access to health care increases voter participation, many of those new voters may vote against the GOP. Republicans try to decrease voter participation—another reason for them to oppose the expansion of health care, especially Medicaid.

Carolyn Herz

💬 Comments drawn from our website
letters@thenation.com

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Time to Choose?

Although The Nation *has not—yet—endorsed a candidate in the Democratic presidential primaries, we've long made clear our admiration for the two real progressives in the race: Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. Either, in our collective view, would make a superb president (though as Richard Parker argues below, any of the current Democratic contenders would be a* HUUUGE *improvement over the incumbent).*

But just because we still cling—perhaps foolishly, given the most recent controversy between the two candidates—to a "both/and" approach and the view that the longer the two of them remain viable candidates, arguing for bold, radical ideas, the better, doesn't mean everyone in our orbit shares that inclination.

When Nation *editorial board member Zephyr Teachout told me she was endorsing Sanders and asked if the magazine would be interested in publishing her reasons, I said, "Of course." You can read the result below. However, I also asked her colleagues on the board whether any of them cared to make the case for Warren. Richard Parker accepted the challenge.* D.D. GUTTENPLAN

Why I Support Bernie Sanders for President

A few weeks ago, I got to watch Bernie Sanders at a health care town hall meeting on a Saturday morning in New Hampshire. He walked into a room of some 100 people, mostly middle- and working-class. After introducing himself and thanking those who were there, he asked people to share how they pay for health care. He listened closely to their stories and made sure he got everybody's name. One woman, representing a family of four, described her $800-a-month premium and $12,000-a-year deductible. Another woman was worried that a big health disaster would happen early in the year, because she couldn't pay her $7,000-a-year deductible out of pocket.

Sanders then used those stories to illustrate how we currently pay for health care; why it represents waste, greed, and cruelty; and why we should switch to Medicare for All, which would enable us to cut out the insurance companies' profits and bureaucracy. The room shifted from angry and skeptical to hopeful.

As I watched him, I realized that what makes Sanders unique isn't his democratic socialism; it is his preternatural political abilities. People were riveted as he spoke and as he listened. He has extreme focus, compassion, and respect for those he disagrees with and is painstakingly honest and

Why I Support Elizabeth Warren for President

Of the four top-tier candidates still chasing the Democratic nomination, only Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders offer bold realignment as core to their campaigns. Joe Biden—for me, and I'm guessing perhaps for you—is the too-accommodating conciliator, while Pete Buttigieg, though immensely talented, is too young, too corporate, and without experience at the national or even state level.

In my view, Warren offers a far more plausible and more detailed case for how the next president must run the government once in office. Her "I've got a plan for that" is actually true: She and her staff tapped first-class teams of advisers from nationwide networks of progressive lawyers, economists, techies, educators, medical and military personnel, and environmentalists. In each of her plans, she has adroitly analyzed key issues (in readable, nontechnical language) and stated what her administration would do to address them. Whether you support her or someone else (or haven't yet made up your mind), it's well worth taking the time to pull a few of Warren's plans off her website: Big Tech, Big Money, Washington corruption, affordable housing, and student loan debt relief are just a few of the topics on offer. Read what she's actually proposing to do, not just in principle or as distant goals but with a clear road map that

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FEBRUARY 10, 2020

The digital version of this issue is available to all subscribers January 28 at TheNation.com

Cover photo: Sam Mooy / Getty Images

BY THE NUMBERS

304

Human rights defenders killed across the globe in 2019, according to a new report by Front Line Defenders

40%

Percentage of murdered human rights defenders who advocated for land, environmental, or indigenous peoples' rights

3.5K

Human rights defenders killed since 1998, the year the United Nations adopted its Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

85%

Percentage of murdered human rights defenders who had previously been threatened

107

Human rights defenders killed in Colombia in 2019, the highest of any country that year (13 cases are still being investigated, which could bring the total to 120)

—Meerabelle Jesuthasan

NURPHOTO / GETTY IMAGES

direct. He has been in politics for decades and has heard thousands of stories, but he was able to be totally present in that room, listening to those particular stories. A thin teenager bravely stood up to ask him a question about cancer research and revealed that she has brain cancer. I wept; so did many others in the room. When Sanders bowed his head briefly, then gave her a smile and warm hug, there was no doubt about his sincerity.

This ability of his to connect and to build trust—which he has proved he can do across race, class, and party lines—will translate into the two things I care about the most: beating Donald Trump and overcoming the corruption and dysfunction of our political system so we can have a more equal, fair, thriving democracy.

Forget the 2016 stereotype: Bernie has developed an extraordinary cross-race and cross-class coalition. He is leading in the polls among Latino voters (a recent poll showed him winning 32 percent of Latino support in California); his support among African Americans is second only to Joe Biden's; and he is leading Biden by 12 percentage points among African Americans under 35. The top Sanders donors are teachers, Walmart workers, and Amazon workers. Among people under 50, he is the clear leader. And his supporters are very enthusiastic. This broad, committed coalition will matter enormously in the fall, when Facebook is infested with lies, Trump's campaign is pushing misinformation, and foreign and corporate actors are trying to twist people into nihilism and hatred.

What makes Sanders unique are his preternatural political abilities.

Some of the hardest people to convince on Sanders are those who believe in his policies the most—older progressive voters. Because they are so heartbroken and beaten down by decades of fearful politics, they have decided they should settle for something less. *Sanders is impossible*, they think. *Unelectable*. They remember the Cold War and fear the word "socialism." Young people (by the way, under 40 isn't *that* young) don't have the same reaction. The truth is that if we settle for something less, too many people may stay home. Sanders is giving people a vision to fight for, and though they know it won't be easy, they are ready for the fight.

SANDERS

So if you're on the fence, I want you to feel confident that if you support Bernie, he will not let you down in a fierce general election. I have watched him over the last 30 years, and his political abilities are among the most underrated in the country. In 2006 he won a Senate seat, held by Republicans for generations, with a whopping 65 percent of the vote, the same year a Republican won the governor's race with 57 percent. When I ran for Congress, a professional communications adviser made me watch Sanders answer questions on Fox News over and over because of his unique ability to refocus questions on what matters to listeners and not get distracted.

As the mayor of Burlington, Vermont, he won over the business community and created a flourishing city

(continued on page 8)

anchors each plan in legislation and executive action.

Warren has also been consistently effective in helping elect other Democrats—allies a president will desperately need. In 2018 alone, she raised $8 million for congressional candidates, then personally called all 172 of them to offer her support and went on to meet with 61 of them face-to-face to lay out how to best deploy that support. She firmly grasps the reality the media's relentless, monocular focus on the presidential race misses: that in order to deliver bold change, the next president will need a Congress that shares (rather than checkmates) an agenda with the White House. She also understands—and here's where her law school years really show—the critical importance of putting in place a federal judiciary vastly different from the one that has been appointed since this president took office.

Her opposition to Wall Street's endless predations has also been consistent, courageous, and persuasive—and tied directly to her recognition that 40 years of growing income and wealth inequality won't be reversed without the reregulation of finance. She has taken on not just bankers but also fellow Democrats, including Larry Summers, Tim Geithner, and, by implication, President Obama himself when he prioritized saving too-big-to-fail banks rather than stopping foreclosures on the homes of 10 million families. She played public and behind-the-scenes roles in crafting the still-unused powers of the Dodd-Frank Act to tame Wall Street and in creating the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Washington's first new (and under the Democrats, demonstrably effective) regulator since the New Deal.

WARREN

In her skill and dedication campaigning for other candidates; in doggedly shepherding tough, controversial bills through Congress; and in constructing a significant federal agency from scratch, Warren has demonstrated her ability to both win elections and govern.

Just as important, in weaving together support across the Democrats' diverse constituencies, she has shown herself to embody not just the prophetic but also the complex and very human mix of emotions most of us feel: indignation, empathy, hope, openness—the deep, abiding yearning to turn America in a new direction. Time and again on the campaign trail, Warren has stunned audiences with her warmth and affection. In her September appearance at Washington Square in New York City, she was an inspired teacher but nobody's schoolmarm.

Warren offers a far more plausible and detailed case for how the next president must govern.

Her personal story—of rising from poverty in Oklahoma, of juggling young motherhood with her studies, of translating academic research into policy and laws that have tangibly improved the lives of millions—offers us insights into her character, history, motivations, and goals that resonate well beyond ultrablue voters and precincts. I firmly believe she is the best candidate to defeat Donald Trump.

(continued on page 8)

THE SCORE/BRYCE COVERT + MIKE KONCZAL

Think of the Children

This December there was an overlooked Christmas miracle: Two senators announced a bipartisan proposal that wasn't terrible. Mitt Romney (R-UT) teamed up with Michael Bennet (D-CO) to endorse an expansion of the child tax credit. Crucially, the bill includes something essential to the economic security of families: a child allowance. If the government would give money to all parents, no matter their income, it would solve two major problems facing Democrats. First, by helping both rich and poor families, parents as well as children, it would unite groups that are often pitted against one another. Second, it could be passed through the process known as reconciliation, which expedites budget bills. This means if Democrats control Congress and the White House next year, the law could go into effect quickly, helping millions of families almost immediately.

> ***If the child tax credit is made fully refundable, families with no income will receive checks.***

The Bennet-Romney proposal would make several changes to the current system; the most important is that most of the child tax credit would be fully refundable. At the moment, a family needs to earn wages to receive benefits. But if the child tax credit is made fully refundable, families with little or no income will receive checks in the mail. This law isn't just for poor people, though; families further up the income ladder would also receive extra money. Effectively, the bill would create a basic income for all families with children, linking the interests of poor, working-class, and middle-class families. This would dramatically bring down poverty among children, as it has in other countries that have put such a system in place, like Canada and the United Kingdom.

Beyond reducing child poverty, this proposal has two other features that should bring it extra attention. First, by being universal for families with children, it would release lawmakers from the straitjacket in which child and family policy has long found itself. As University of Maryland history professor Sonya Michel discusses in her book *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights*, policy around children and care work in the United States has played the interests of children against the rights of mothers since industrialization. Throughout history, laws intended to improve the lives of poor children have placed blame on their parents for not earning enough and have stigmatized and punished families for this. At the same time, the right of mothers to engage in paid labor and to be able to rely on a policy infrastructure to support that choice has been seen as an abandonment of their responsibility to their children.

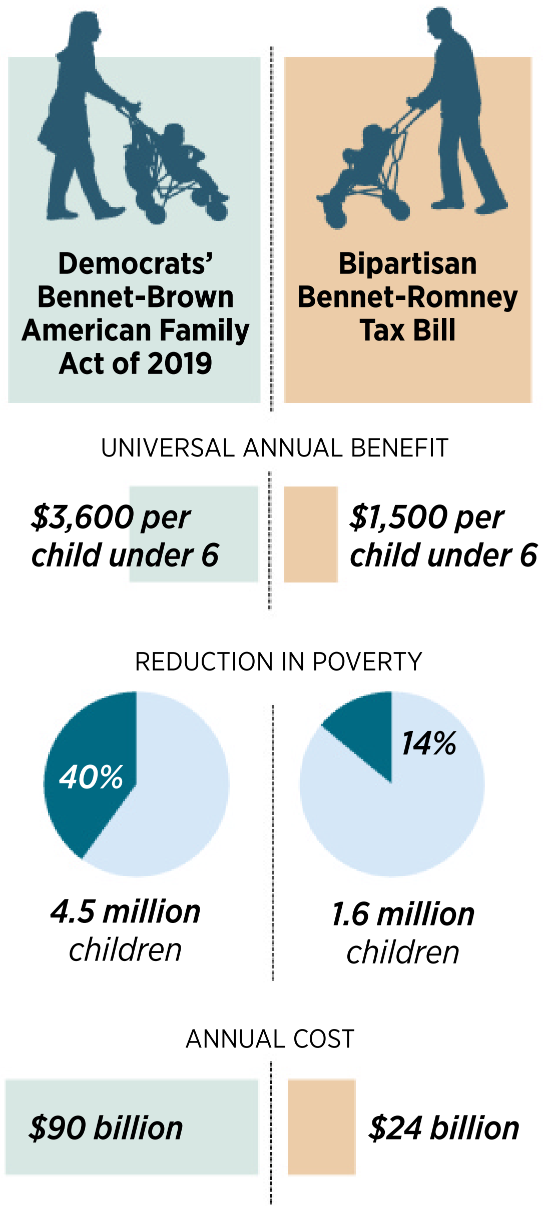
A basic income for all families with kids would overcome this problem. The money would provide security for children as well as a de facto wage for care work. That it would go to all parents will help protect it from critics who scream about welfare. The amount proposed by Bennet and Romney is too low—$1,500 a year for each child under age 6. But once in place, that figure could be increased. From there, the question of how to help families could progress to family leave and universal day care, building on the foundation laid by the child allowance.

It also fits perfectly into a 2021 Democratic legislative agenda. There is a small but real chance that the Democrats will gain control of the executive and legislative branches, with a slim margin in the Senate. Since the filibuster hasn't become a hot topic in the primaries, it seems unlikely that the Senate will repeal the procedure, which means 60 votes will still be required to pass most major bills. This is a shame: Democrats currently require at least 60 votes to build something, but Republicans need just 50 to defund it or tear it apart. (Romney's cosponsorship of the bill now is nice, but during the Obama administration, he wouldn't even back a federal version of his own health care law, so it's difficult to imagine him continuing his support under a Democratic president.)

With control of the White House, however, there is important legislation that the Democrats could pass with 50 votes, by structuring it as spending through reconciliation. The Bennet-Romney plan is one example, and a larger version of it known as the American Family Act is another. The latter would reduce child poverty by 40 percent and make the assistance a monthly check, which is a clear, tangible government benefit. In 2022, when there are key Senate seats up for grabs, voters would surely reward the Democrats for this financial support. In short, not only is a child allowance achievable, but it could be implemented quickly, would build support for the Democratic Party, and would provide security for our most vulnerable. What's not to like? **Mike Konczal**

Two Ways to Cut Child Poverty: A Lot or a Little

Both plans include giving families a child allowance, but one would lift nearly **three times as many children out of poverty.**



Source: Niskanen Center
2020 infographic: Tracy Matsue Loeffelholz

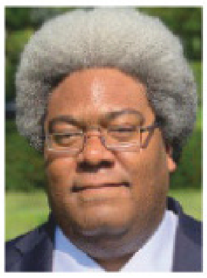
NATION NEWS

New Team Members

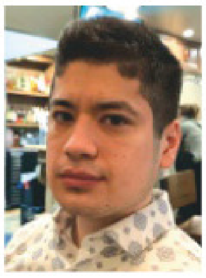
The Nation marked the new year by appointing Elie Mystal as justice correspondent and Ken Klippenstein as DC correspondent.

"Elie's talent for making legal and political issues accessible to nonlawyers, without losing the nuance of core legal concepts, has made him an indispensable resource to *Nation* readers and the larger public," says *Nation* editor D.D. Guttenplan. "I'm also particularly pleased to welcome Ken, who on his résumé describes himself as 'a bloodhound who enjoys sniffing out scoops'—a fitting successor to a job once held by I.F. Stone."

In his new role, Mystal, a prolific writer on politics, culture, law, and racial justice, will increase his output exclusively for *The Nation*. In addition to writing regular commentary for TheNation.com and occasional features for the print edition of the magazine, he will bring his keen legal mind and barbed pen to a monthly column, "Objection!"—providing incisive analysis on a whole range of issues related to justice.



Klippenstein's reporting will focus on the machinations of the national security state. Through aggressive use of the Freedom of Information Act and a robust network of government sources, he will provide readers with a warts-and-all look at how our government's most secretive institutions, from the FBI to the Pentagon, operate. He will also use his investigative know-how to document the Trump administration's under-the-radar politics and policies.



Aaron Ross Coleman

The Myth of the Woke CEO

Corporations don't protect us from discrimination. In fact, they often increase it.

The relative horror of Donald Trump's presidency warps public memory, making old pariahs—Mitt Romney, George W. Bush, even the late John McCain—no longer seem that bad. Yet of all the realigned allies and rehabilitated reputations, perhaps the most troubling remains the media rebranding of corporations as civil rights advocates.

In a *Slate* essay immediately after the 2016 election, Daniel Gross insisted that "in Trump's America, in many respects, Fortune 500 companies will be far more progressive, and far more significant forces for progressive causes, than Washington." After Trump's inauguration, *Daily Beast* correspondent Amy Zimmerman quipped that companies like Coca-Cola and Airbnb raised "the biggest middle fingers" to him with their multicultural Super Bowl ads. In the wake of Trump's Muslim travel ban, CNBC and *Fortune* reported that Silicon Valley CEOs like Apple's Tim Cook were "slamming" the administration. After denouncing neo-Nazis, CEOs of companies like JPMorgan Chase earned praise in David Gelles's *New York Times* piece "The Moral Voice of Corporate America" and condemnation in John Carney's *Breitbart* article "Corporate Antifa: CEOs Revolt Against American Democracy."

The narrative is misleadingly simple: Frustrated by Trump's intolerance, American corporations have stepped in to defend civil rights. But desperation distorts, and in today's private sector, discrimination slips under the radar. Since Trump became president, Ford has been sued for weeding out disabled applicants, Koch Foods settled a lawsuit for letting managers hit and grope Hispanic workers, Walmart settled one for illegally firing a blind and deaf cart pusher, the Cato Corporation ousted workers for getting pregnant, UPS failed to accommodate pregnant employees, Dollar General avoided hiring black job seekers, Uber retaliated against sexually harassed staffers, and American Airlines refused work to disabled employees. This is a mere fraction of the equal employment cases argued during the president's tenure. Yet since we've sailed into the moral Bermuda Triangle that is Trump's presidency, corporations, which often end up as defendants in class-action civil rights lawsuits, pose as liberal allies.

In a *Vanity Fair* article in which CEOs again denounced the Trump administration over its stance on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, Maya Kosoff posited that tech leaders wanted to protect immigrant children so badly, they'd fight for Dreamers "even if it costs their companies money…. In calling for Congress to focus on finding a legislative fix to protect Dreamers, tech companies are effectively prioritizing the immigration issue over tax reform." But the tax cuts cleared Congress. DACA didn't.

Despite the grandstanding and chest-pounding of companies like IBM, FedEx, and Facebook, earnings still matter more than equality. That the private sector's pressure campaigns failed to extend DACA, end the Muslim travel ban, or reverse Trump's trans military ban yet succeeded in slashing taxes, lowering emission standards, and reducing environmental protections shows where the interests of the so-called special interests still lie. Corporate influence remains so crooked that last year, after losing in court to former employee Sheryl Hubbell, FedEx owed more on a gender discrimination and retaliation judgment than it did in corporate taxes. Many companies aren't simply floundering in their support for civil and human rights in the Trump era; they often go to war against those rights.

Whether one considers the American International Auto Dealers Association's efforts to weaken fair lending guidelines, the American Bankers Association's lobbying to loosen redlining regulations, or Comcast's arguments against the Civil Rights Act of 1866, Trump's election has marked not the dawn of a new era of enlightened business ethics but the continuation of privatized affronts to civil rights.

> *The narrative is misleadingly simple: Frustrated by Trump, US corporations have stepped in to defend civil rights.*

The recent wave of feel-good stories about private sector do-gooders is a mirage. Firms like McKinsey & Company consulted for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and continue to function as legally mandated, profit-seeking organizations whose efforts are often angled against equality in the name of efficiency. That's just

TOP RIGHT: ANDY FRIEDMAN

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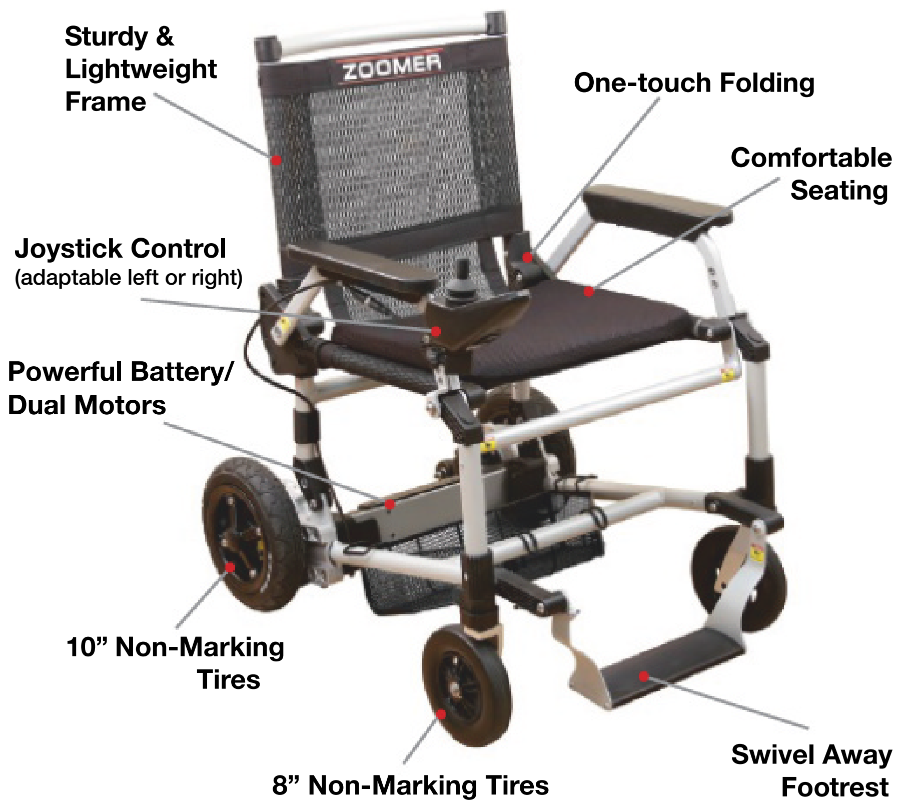
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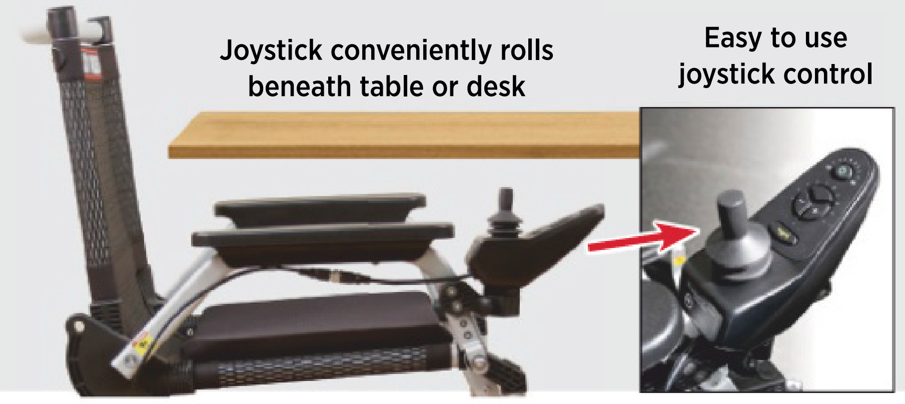
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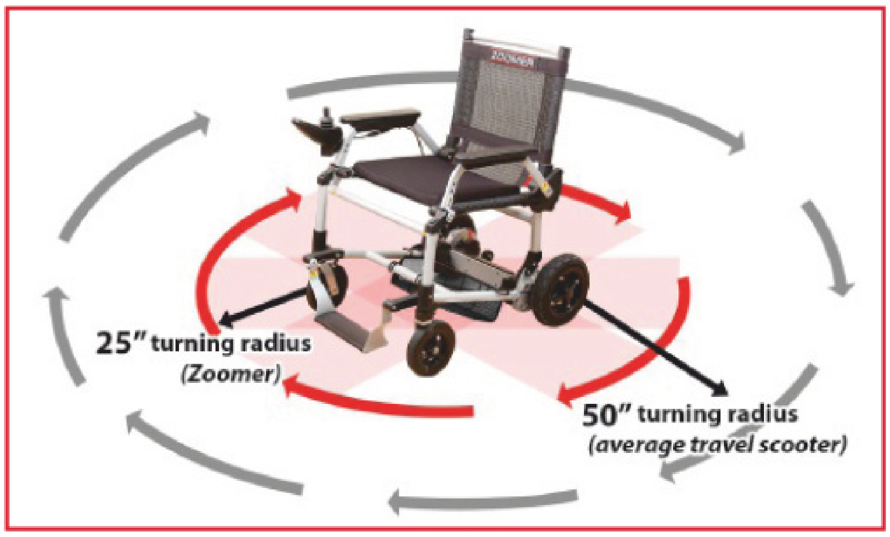
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business. Some brands embrace celebrities like Colin Kaepernick, as Nike did, and flirt with the imagery and rhetoric of resistance marketing because it's popular among their millennial consumers. But that's just PR. In truth, Trump's election provided a face-lift for many companies whose public profile sagged after the Great Recession and Bernie Sanders's populist 2016 campaign. In this new political age, however, we should be particularly wary of embracing rebranded corporate identities as civil rights victories. After all, these companies have been using such PR tactics for years.

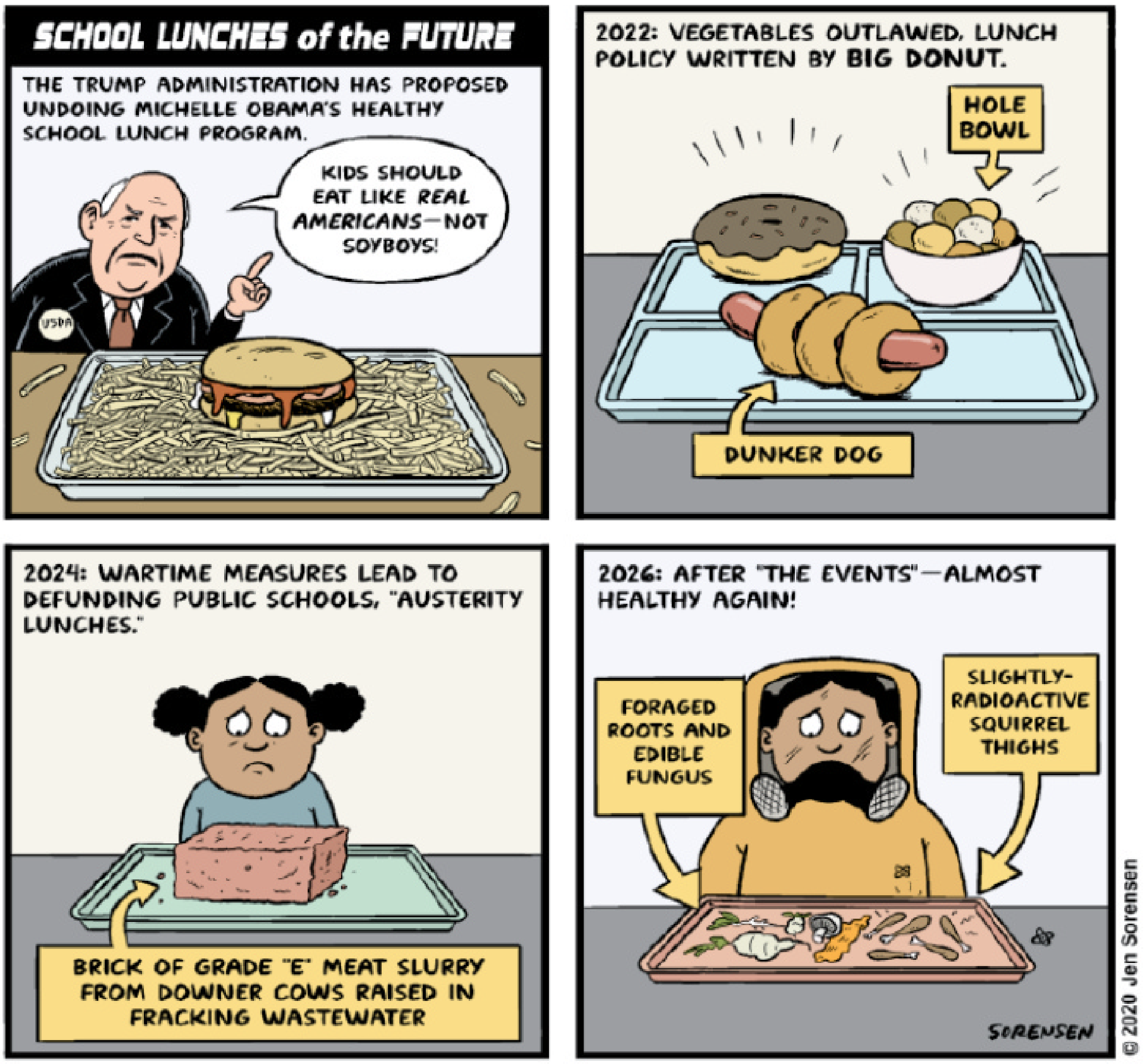
During the Nixon administration, corporations assumed the guise of civil rights advocates. In the early 1970s, insurance companies, banks, and real estate agents promised they'd provide a private sector solution to the problem of long-segregated African American communities, with fair access to housing. They sold it as a win-win enterprise. Yet as Princeton historian Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor chronicles in her book *Race for Profit*, the liberal ally persona functioned as a ruse to extract more money from already ransacked black neighborhoods. Instead of building homes, entrepreneurs relabeled decrepit slums. Speculators hid fire damage, warped floors, loose wires, faulty boilers, and leaking pipes. Sellers pulled the wooden boards off buildings condemned for demolition and flipped units unfit for human habitation to black buyers. The homes crumbled, and support for fair housing collapsed along with them.

Despondent, well-intentioned liberals are looking to the private sector for answers. But in a country where trans workers lose their jobs for being trans and where black women on average earn just 61 percent of what white men do, we can't trust the instincts of a group of businesses that play both sides of the fence and whose true loyalties follow only profit. Instead, businesses must be compelled by law to treat people equally and to ensure rights independent of our age, ability, race, gender, color, or creed. ■

Aaron Ross Coleman is a journalist covering race and economics.

COMIX NATION

JEN SORENSEN


SCHOOL LUNCHES of the FUTURE
THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION HAS PROPOSED UNDOING MICHELLE OBAMA'S HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM.
KIDS SHOULD EAT LIKE *REAL* AMERICANS—NOT SOYBOYS!
USDA
2022: VEGETABLES OUTLAWED, LUNCH POLICY WRITTEN BY BIG DONUT.
HOLE BOWL
DUNKER DOG
2024: WARTIME MEASURES LEAD TO DEFUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, "AUSTERITY LUNCHES."
BRICK OF GRADE "E" MEAT SLURRY FROM DOWNER COWS RAISED IN FRACKING WASTEWATER
2026: AFTER "THE EVENTS"—ALMOST HEALTHY AGAIN!
FORAGED ROOTS AND EDIBLE FUNGUS
SLIGHTLY-RADIOACTIVE SQUIRREL THIGHS
SORENSEN

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(continued from page 4)
by being direct, by having a vision, and by engaging people in the community who are usually ignored. He was an effective congressman who brought community health centers to underserved communities. I remember talking to an octogenarian Republican in 1994 who supported him because he was independent and talked about stuff that mattered in people's daily lives.

SANDERS

Sanders is uniquely ready to beat Trump because he embodies the opposite of Trumpism. Whereas Trump lies, Sanders tells the truth. Whereas Trump distracts, Sanders stays focused. Whereas Trump divides, Sanders unites us. When Sanders talks about the greed of big corporations, he is helping people see that the real enemy of working people is big money, not one another. That's a fighting message but also a message of love—one so many people are ready to hear. ZEPHYR TEACHOUT

Zephyr Teachout is an associate professor of law at Fordham University and the author of the forthcoming book Break 'Em Up: Recovering Our Freedom From Big Ag, Big Tech, and Big Money.

(continued from page 4)
Let me conclude, however, by talking not about Senator Warren but about you and me. This winter and spring, campaign hard for your candidate. Talk with your family, friends, and neighbors; use your social media to expand your advocacy. Knock on doors and call voters you don't know. Sign petitions. Affix bumper stickers. Wear buttons. Keep a record of what you've done and a calendar of what you're going to do between now and November.

WARREN

This is an election in which voter turnout may be as crucial as the votes themselves. I hope Elizabeth Warren is our next president, but more important, I want to be sure Donald Trump isn't. The next time you're asked which candidate you support this year, consider responding, "I will support the nominee of the Democratic Party 100 percent." Any of the Democrats running—any—would be a far better president than the one we have now. RICHARD PARKER

Richard Parker, who teaches at Harvard, cofounded Mother Jones. *His first presidential campaign was John F. Kennedy's.*

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4 VACANT HOMES
FOR EACH
HOUSELESS PERSON
PEOPLE OVER PROFIT

JEFF CHIU / AP

GIMME SHELTER

Moms 4 Housing

On January 20, Moms 4 Housing, a group of unhoused and insecurely housed mothers who'd been occupying a vacant home in West Oakland, announced they had reached an agreement with the owner, Wedgewood Properties, to purchase it through the Oakland Community Land Trust. The deal comes after the Alameda County Sheriff's Office sent some 30 deputies in riot gear to evict the group. Police used a battering ram to enter the house and arrested two of the mothers (Tolani King, 46, and Misty Cross, 38) and two supporters (Jesse Turner, 25, and Walter Baker, 28).

While the agreement is a win for the moms, they see it as just the beginning of a larger fight. "The intention was not to get this house—the intention was to spark a movement," explained Carroll Fife, director of the Oakland office of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment. Fife later told the San Jose *Mercury News*, "People are talking about things and changing their relationship to land and who deserves it, just because of this action that [Moms 4 Housing] took."

One of the mothers, Dominique Walker, said in a statement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, "This is what happens when we organize, when people come together to build the beloved community. Today we honor Dr. King's radical legacy by taking Oakland back from banks and corporations." —Taliah Mancini

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Ross Barkan

Oppo Dump Season Is Upon Us

This is how the opposition research sausage is made.

One day after CNN reported that Bernie Sanders allegedly told Elizabeth Warren, in a private meeting in 2018, that a woman could not defeat Donald Trump, a reporter from another TV network trumpeted a different Sanders scoop.

"NEW—Bernie Sanders on House floor in '98: 'Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator who should be overthrown, and his ability to make weapons of destruction must be eliminated,'" tweeted NBC's Jonathan Allen, with a link to his longer story about the rising tensions between Warren and Sanders. "One of many times he backed regime change in Iraq and elsewhere," Allen continued, not without glee.

In the story, Allen wrote that Sanders, despite his nearly impeccable anti-war record, "voted repeatedly for a U.S. policy of regime change in Iraq," citing his votes for the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 and accusing him of supporting the Clinton administration's air strikes. These discrepancies were "pointed to by a Democrat familiar with Sanders' record," according to Allen, who then quoted from the Vermont senator's floor speech and noted that "while Sanders' more mixed record on war and peace hasn't yet become an issue, it is something that his critics have long talked about that could bubble up at any time."

If you're wondering where all this came from and why it matters, welcome to oppo dump season: the most wonderful time in an electoral campaign, when reputations are wrecked, personal lives ruined, and voters misled.

For the journalists who cover politics and the people who work for campaigns, the oppo dump—short for "opposition research dump"—is a tried and true tradition. Despite its power to determine the course of media coverage in campaigns of national and hyperlocal scope alike, it's not well understood by the public.

Many journalists, content to maintain a certain enigmatic glamor around their profession, don't like to talk about it, lest it impugn their credentials as investigative watchdogs.

As a practicing journalist, as well as someone who once ran for office, I've been on both ends of this process at different times in my career. Campaigns engage in it because they want to win elections. Journalists, however, have a murkier justification.

Here's how it works. Campaigns, depending on their size and scope, employ researchers to dig into a political opponent's past. These researchers often do the hard digging that journalists, in an era of shrinking newsrooms, no longer have the time to do. Investigators scour old newspapers, TV and Web archives, social media, and various public records for damning information or ideological inconsistencies. Well-funded campaigns have the resources to do this extensively.

Typically, oppo dumps occur closer to election time, when more voters are paying attention. After the information is found, the campaign must decide which reporter and which media organization to feed it to. Many factors come into play here. Is the outlet respected enough? Can it deliver maximum impact? Almost as important is the reporter. Campaigns don't necessarily want the best reporter to deliver the scoop. They want one who will tell the story the way they want it told.

The campaign makes a crucial stipulation: no fingerprints! This means the journalist can't reveal where the dirt came from, creating the illusion that the hit originated with the reporter. After all, there is far more power in a seemingly independent report than in an attack clearly aimed by one candidate at another.

> *Campaigns don't necessarily want the best reporter to deliver the scoop. They want the one who will tell the story the way they want it told.*

The journalist then takes the scoop with the stipulation, stated or not, that it will be reported in a way the campaign will find favorable. (If it isn't, the journalist risks losing all access—and future scoops—to rival publications. This is the pitfall of access journalism.)

After the dirt has been reported, the campaign that unearthed it can then condemn the misdeed from afar, embarrassing its opponent.

The CNN report about the Sanders-Warren meeting could have followed this pattern, though we can't know for sure without the reporter giving up the initial source. It appears a Warren staffer or someone very close to the meeting leaked a version of the comment to CNN, allowing Warren to then confirm a reported story and put Sanders on the defensive. The reality is that we don't know what truly happened.

With the same caveats, it's likely that the campaign of one of Sanders's rivals—Warren, Joe Biden, or even Pete Buttigieg come to mind—fed Allen the clip of Sanders speaking on the House floor. With that reported, the rival got the desired hit on Sanders, and Allen could sleep soundly, knowing that journalism had been done.

Except that it wasn't the whole story. Lee Fang of *The Intercept* dug up a longer clip to give more context to Sanders's speech. In it his "brutal dictator" remark is an aside in a much longer condemnation of the United States' decision to take military action without congressional approval or international support. "I have serious doubts, however, whether the action that we are taking today will take us one step forward in that direction, and I fear that innocent civilians, that women and children in that country, will be killed," Sanders said.

Had Allen reported the full context of that speech, it would have made for better journalism, but it would also have violated the assumption of the oppo dump: You report this the way we gave it to you.

Opposition research can, of course, be a foundation of great journalism. But too often reporters are content merely to carry the water of a campaign, creating false impressions for a public already distrustful of the media. ■

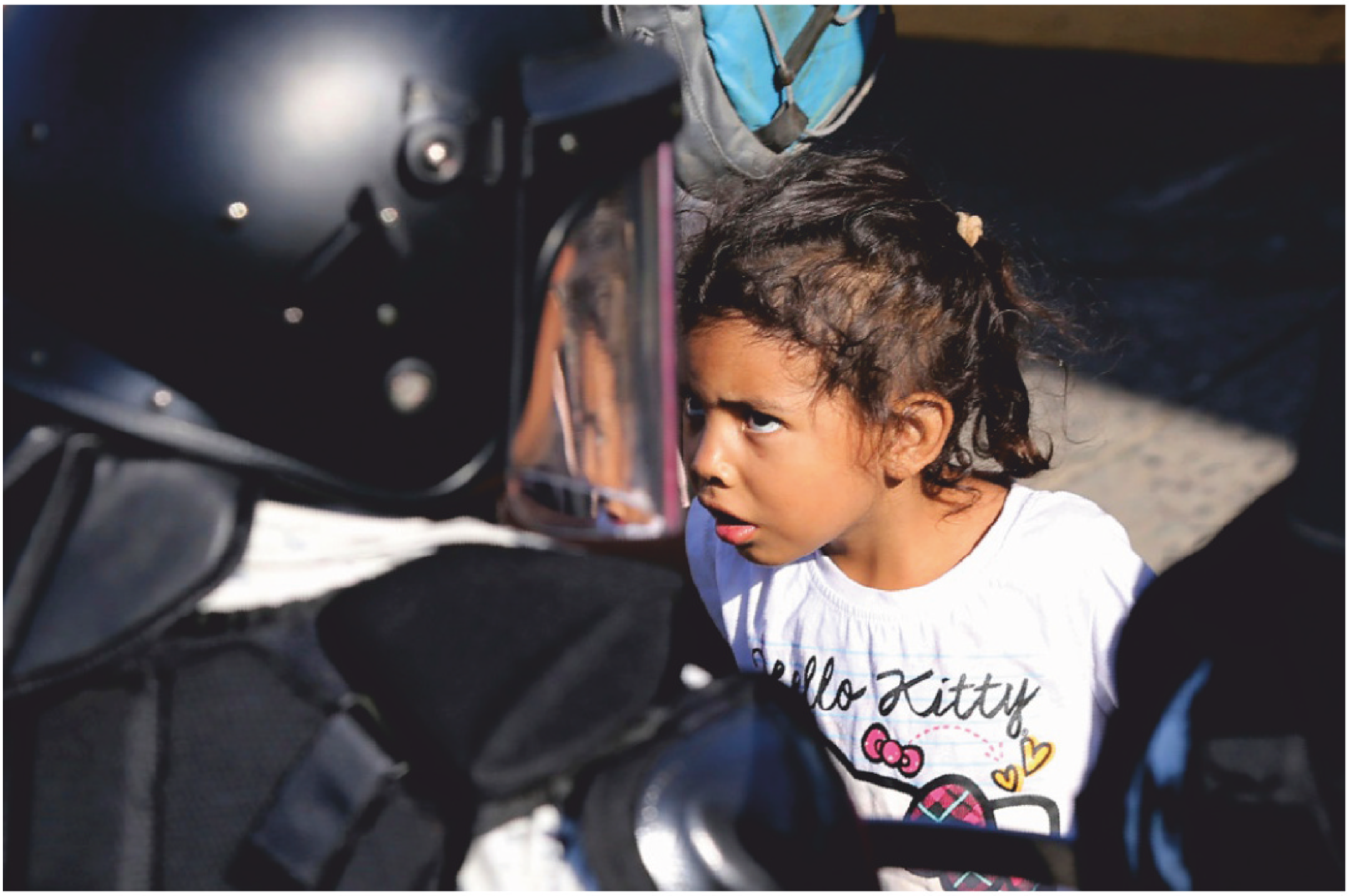
Ross Barkan is a journalist based in New York. He writes a column on national politics for The Guardian *and contributes frequently on local politics to* Gothamist.

> *Had Allen reported the full context, it would have violated the assumption of the oppo dump: You report this the way we gave it to you.*

SNAPSHOT / MARCO UGARTE

Stare Down

At a border crossing between Guatemala and Mexico, a migrant girl glowers at Mexican National Guardsmen in Tecun Uman, Guatemala, on January 18. Under pressure from the United States, Mexico has ordered its security forces to impede the journey north of Central American migrants.



AP PHOTO

Calvin Trillin
Deadline Poet

PRINCE HARRY'S EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS IN CANADA (WORST-CASE SCENARIO)

The prince has trouble finding work.
Although without a pause he's hunted,
He hasn't seen an ad that says,
"Experienced ribbon cutter wanted."

Fire on the mountain: In the heart of the inferno on Gospers Mountain.

AUSTRALIA IS BURNING

The country's climate crisis has clearly reached a tipping point. But it could go either way.

DANIEL JUDT

Where there's fire: Satellite photos show smoke over Kangaroo Island.

Blue Mountains, Australia

“There is no one in this current federal government that has any semblance of a sense of crisis,” Mark Greenhill tells me as we sit in his mayoral office in Katoomba, a small town some 100 kilometers west of Sydney. It is December 19. For over a month, three massive bushfires have plagued this small mountain community, a UNESCO World Heritage site, ravaging its ecosystem and laying waste to residents’ homes. I could smell the smoke in Sydney that morning; the haze descended on the city at least a dozen times in the past month, casting a sepia-toned pall and tripping office fire alarms. But it was nothing compared with Katoomba, where my eyes began to burn the moment I stepped off the train.

As Greenhill speaks, his eyes dart to the window behind me. “Oh, fuck,” he says. I turn to look. A thick gray plume is billowing up from the trees just north of us. He jumps up and rushes to the window. “That is a cloud of fire,” he says. “That’s climate change right there.” A moment passes as the two of us stand in silence. “So, so,” he continues, picking up his train of thought, “there’s no sense of that national crisis. And that’s what we’re missing.” He points back to the fire cloud—“I’m just going to find out what that is”—and begins texting furiously.

The technical term for what we saw that day is “pyrocumulonimbus,” or “pyroCb” for short. PyroCbs are weather events generated by wildfires. They can produce dry lightning storms, high winds, even full-blown tornadoes. (An aerial photo of the Hiroshima bombing, long thought to capture the distinctive nuclear mushroom cloud, was only recently reidentified as an image of the pyroCb from the ensuing firestorm that swept through the city.) In recent weeks, “pyroCb” has become a household term in Australia—a literal manifestation of the fires but also a symbol, nudging us to see what is happening to the country in the terms of armed conflict. As the fires tear through town after town with ruthless efficiency, pyroCbs lend them the look of an airborne attack: climate blitzkrieg. When Prime Minister Scott Morrison called in the navy to evacuate thousands of people stranded on beaches and mobilized the Australian Defence Force to help fight the fires, the symbolism became reality. Australia went to war with itself.

In Katoomba, tourists have begun taking selfies in front of posters of its famed mountain vista; the real view is hidden by a screen of smoke.

An uncanny effect of the climate crisis: the way we describe the world no longer lines up with the way the world is. “A smoke-free zone,” reads a sign on Katoomba’s main street. Similar notices are posted throughout downtown Sydney. The fires have made them ironic. Meanwhile, a host of common metaphors—“can’t handle the heat,” “playing with fire”—have become uselessly literal (much in the way that “trump” is now a tainted verb). And then there are moments when reality has turned so surreal that our depictions of it become the ghostly receipts of normality. In Katoomba, tourists have begun taking selfies in front of posters of its famed mountain vista; the real view is hidden behind a screen of smoke. Such dissonances seem trivial when compared with the destruction wrought by the fires. But I found them profoundly disturbing to witness. They are signs that the link between the world and our words is beginning to fray.

Perhaps the most brutal irony of all has been the Australian government’s response to the crisis. Much attention has been paid to the Morrison government’s complacency—the inadequate provision of aid, a prime minister who opted for a secretive holiday in Hawaii while public servants and volunteers begged for government help. But one of the unintended effects of this inaction has been to distract from what the government *was* doing during the crisis. While the bushfires raged in Australia, the country’s delegates to the United Nations’ climate negotiations in Madrid helped undermine international climate policy by insisting, through obvious accounting tricks that amounted to lies, that “Australia is also taking real action on climate change and we’re getting results,” as Morrison put it. But which results exactly did the prime minister have in mind? The catastrophic fires? The unlivable cities? The deaths of his citizens?

Once climate change becomes a crisis in wealthy, white-majority, Western nations, then surely we will act. This has long been an unspoken tenet of climate politics, a terrible but surefire last resort, and it is a statement I heard all the time in Australia: These fires are so severe, so terrible, so impossible to ignore, that something will have to give. “There’s no way that politicians cannot react,” Julie-Anne Richards, the executive director of Climate Action Network Australia, tells me by phone as I ride the train back from Katoomba to Sydney, queasy from the smoke. “There’s no way that people experience what we’re experiencing right now and forget that by the next election.” This is one way to understand the fires, as the beginning of the end of climate inaction, a darkly apt coda to the year the world woke up to the climate crisis.

And yet, here and whenever else I heard it, this view was less a conviction than a hope. And behind that hope, a fear that somewhere along the path from the country’s climate crisis to its climate politics, something was broken. Perhaps, the fear goes, the lesson from these fires will be that there is nothing inevitable about the link between a harsher, more-present climate crisis and better climate politics. Perhaps it is just the opposite: The deeper the crisis, the harder it becomes to act.

In terms of climate justice, Australia is a rare combination of perpetrator and victim. Its politics are steeped in denial, its politicians beholden to fossil fuel and mining interests. How catastrophes like these fires—clear, stinging evidence of the climate crisis that the country’s policies have helped cause—will impact those politics is one of the most important questions of the next decade.

Daniel Judt is a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University, where he studies political theory. This is the second of a three-part series on climate justice.

TOP: DAVID GRAY / GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: NASA

JUST BEFORE HE SPOTS THE FIRE CLOUD, GREENHILL SPREADS A MAP OF THE Blue Mountains on the table in front of us. The region includes Katoomba and a number of other mountain communities in (normally) lush green forests. "We've got winds pushing this fire south at the moment," he tells me, gesturing to the northern part of the map, where the Gospers Mountain mega-fire has already burned over 1,000,000 acres. "So this hits us in the next few days, probably. Wind changes towards the back end of the next couple weeks," he continues, sweeping his hand northward from the southeast, where two more fires are threatening to combine. "So we face the prospect of being hit from this side and being hit from this side"—north and south. "That's never happened before."

Australia has seen many terrible fire seasons. In 2003, fires swept through the suburbs of Canberra, the nation's capital, killing four people and destroying hundreds of homes. In 2009, bushfires in the state of Victoria killed 173 people in a single day—the worst bushfire disaster in Australian history, now referred to simply as Black Saturday. But every climate scientist and firefighter I spoke with confirmed Greenhill's claim: It has never been like this.

The conditions are unprecedented. Back-to-back droughts have turned even rain forests into kindling. With the droughts has come heat. Last year was the hottest on record in Australia. December 17 was the hottest day in the country's history, with a national maximum average of 105.6 degrees Fahrenheit. As I write on the afternoon of January 4, it is 120 degrees in the town of Penrith, at the base of the Blue Mountains, which makes it the hottest place not just in Australia but in the world. And with the heat come winds—"dessicatingly dry," in the words of one expert—that whip up fires and smuggle embers across the containment lines.

The scope of the fires is unprecedented. New South Wales, the state that has borne the brunt of them thus far, has seen several 100,000-acre mega-blazes with 200-foot flames and their own unpredictable weather systems, including a fire tornado (exactly what it sounds like) that flipped a 10-ton fire truck in the southeastern town of Jingellic in December, killing a firefighter. Greg Mullins, a former fire commissioner of New South Wales, tells me that in his 48 years of firefighting, he had never seen conditions this severe. "I'm seeing things that I don't understand," he says. Other former chiefs from different states confirm this sentiment. Naomi Brown, a former head of the Australian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, tells me this season "hit us like a train."

> **"I just have this sickening, sinking feeling. There's just too much fire in the landscape."**
>
> —David Bowman, University of Tasmania

Climate comes home: Protesters outside the residence of Prime Minister Scott Morrison—or "Scomo," as he is not so affectionately known.

YOUR CHI
FRACK OFF!
SAVE PLANET A
THERE IS NO PLANET B!

Caption Bold Leadin To di dolupta epudis nectatur, opti comcie cuptque plitis magn istiam hil eum et abor remque sa simus am veligene non et map natem quidebisciume.

JENNY EVANS / GETTY IMAGES

The consequences of the fires are unprecedented as well, with more than 2,000 homes destroyed, at least 28 people dead, and over 26 million acres burned (compared with 1.9 million acres in California in 2018)—to say nothing of the noxious smoke, which has spread all the way to Chile and made Canberra the most polluted city in the world. Along the country's southeastern coast, mass evacuations have been organized by the Australian Navy, with the help of Esso, an arm of ExxonMobil, which dispatched two of its ships from oil rigs to help the stranded. (The company was "ready to assist in whatever way possible," according to *The Age*, though presumably that doesn't include curbing its projected 35 percent increase in oil production from now to 2030.) And then there's the carbon footprint of the fires themselves, 400 million tons of carbon dioxide at the time of writing, which is well over half the amount that Australia emitted in 2018.

To dispense with the obvious: "There's no doubt that climate change is the culprit," David Bowman, a fire expert at the University of Tasmania, tells me. Climate scientists have been predicting this kind of catastrophic fire season for years, he adds.

And we are nowhere near the end. Australia's worst fires normally occur in late January and early February. (The 2003 Canberra fires erupted on January 18; Black Saturday was February 7, 2009.) "We're in the fog of war!" Bowman exclaims when I ask him how bad the damage will be. The only thing that will stop the fires is sustained rain, he continues, and that may not come for months. "Look, mate," he says, "if you're looking at these weather forecasts and there were no fire right now, you'd be worried." Toward the end of our conversation, he says, unprompted, "I just have this sickening, sinking feeling." And then, three times, almost to himself, "There's just too much fire in the landscape."

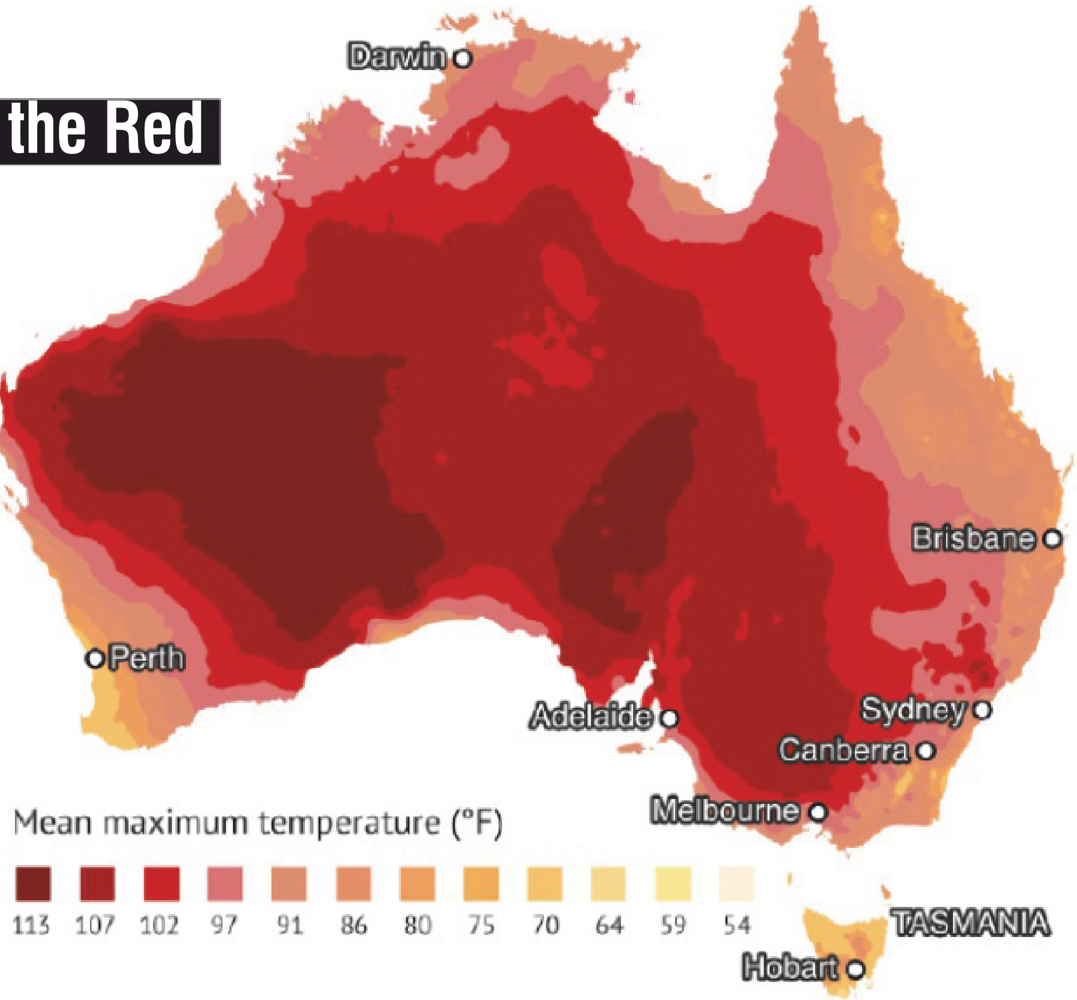
WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR NEWS ABOUT THE fire cloud, Greenhill drives me to one of Katoomba's lookout points in the "mayoral limo" (his Kia Rio). As he winds up the deserted mountain roads—the Rural Fire Service has closed most of them—I ask him for a quick stock take. Enough fire volunteers? He laughs. "No. Nowhere near. A portion of our trucks are actually in other parts of the state fighting fires, so we're really stretched," he says. Water levels? "Shit! About 30 percent."

As we pull into the lookout, I can barely refrain from gasping. Smoke spreads across the valleys that surround us. The land—full of vibrant green in the pictures I'd googled hours before—is a uniform orange-brown, so irrevocably parched that it is hard to see how it ever had been or could be otherwise. "Worst-case scenario is that we get smashed on all three sides," he says. "Homes and lives." He doesn't even have to say "lost."

As we retreat from the lookout, I ask Greenhill, who moved to the Blue Mountains 30 years ago and has been mayor for the past six, what he would do in that worst-case scenario. "I'll stay," he says decisively. "I figure it's my job to stay. If I go, what kind of signal does that

send? But this is all about climate change," he continues. "Bushfires happen all the time in the Blue Mountains, but not like this. Not with the bush as dry as it is, not with so many fires, not with rain that hasn't come and won't come, you know, fire behavior that I've never seen before.… That's why it's part of the climate crisis. It's the sheer number and scale of the fires and what sits behind those fires that is truly worrying." Later, back in his office, he tells me, "I guess there's a sense of dread right now. You've seen the maps. The city that I lead and have led for years now is literally surrounded by fire."

In the Red



The hottest place: On January 4, the temperature in Penrith, at the base of the Blue Mountains, reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit, making it the hottest place on Earth.

BOM AUSTRALIA

ON THE DAY I VISITED GREENHILL, SCOTT Morrison was in Hawaii on his ill-timed vacation. (His office initially insisted that reports of the trip were "wrong" but sheepishly retracted that after pictures of the prime minister—or "Scomo," as he is not so affectionately known to Australians—surfaced of him bro-ing it up with Aussie tourists on a beach.) Only when the deaths began to mount and apocalyptic images made the front page of newspapers around the world did Morrison begin a tour of the affected areas and announce a more robust federal response.

But better disaster relief does not imply better climate politics. In September, David Littleproud, the minister for water resources, drought, rural finance, natural disaster, and emergency management, proclaimed, "I don't know if climate change is man-made." In November, Michael McCormack, the deputy prime minister, went on the radio and, stringing together a haphazard collection of right-wing buzzwords, denounced the "pure, enlightened, and woke capital city greenies" and "inner-city raving lunatics" who were trying to link the bushfires to climate change.

Both later reversed their positions. But that only paved the way for a second wave of denial: the notion that climate change is man-made but it isn't Australians who are causing it. This has become one of Morrison's main talking points. "The suggestion [in] any way, shape, or form that Australia, accountable for 1.3 percent of the world's emissions, that the individual actions of Australia are impacting directly on specific fire events, whether it's here or anywhere else in the world, that doesn't bear up to credible scientific evidence," he said in November. After repeated questions from journalists at a press conference on January 2, he conceded that climate change had worsened the fire season. But he has yet to back away from the not-Australia's-emissions line.

Morrison is relying on the fact that the way we think about responsibility for climate change has lagged the way climate change actually works. Of course Australia's emissions are not directly or solely responsible for its fires. (Would that climate change were so just!) But the country is the 15th-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, and its emissions per capita are the highest among members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development—more than three times the global average. Also, Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas. Until we move beyond understanding responsibility for the climate crisis as a direct correlation between one particular set of emissions and one particular natural disaster, politicians like Morrison will keep getting away with their bad-faith claims.

> **"Bushfires happen all the time in the Blue Mountains, but not like this. We're literally surrounded by fire."**
>
> —Mark Greenhill, mayor, Blue Mountains

As the fires worsen into Australia's gravest national crisis since World War II, Morrison is leaning hard on another defense. He concedes that climate change is real, that it is costing Australia lives and land, and that reducing emissions will contribute to mitigating the crisis. But he insists that Australia has already taken the robust climate action his critics demand. "The business-as-usual model gets us there in a canter," he said of Australia's emissions reduction pledge under the Paris Agreement. "Our climate policy settings are to meet and beat the emissions reduction targets," he asserted in a recent press conference.

This is a different strain of denial: not a dismissal of the science or an obfuscation of responsibility but rather a complete reshaping of the past. It is the culmination of a decades-long effort by Morrison's predecessors to put in place the kinds of deceptive structures—accounting tricks, low expectations, complex legal loopholes—that would allow future governments to describe the history of Australia's inaction on climate change as precisely the opposite.

THAT EFFORT BEGAN IN 1997 WITH THE FIRST LANDMARK climate agreement, the Kyoto Protocol. Under Kyoto, Australia was one of the only developed nations that negotiated a commitment to increase its emissions, by no more than 8 percent over 1990 levels by 2012. Even at that time, this was an absurdly low bar to clear. (The US agreed to cut its

Pillar of fire: Thousands of tourists fled Australia's eastern coast in late December as flames raged out of control and smoke blanketed the beaches.

GLEN MOREY / AP

> At the recent UN climate negotiations in Madrid, "Australia was willing to destroy the whole system...to destroy the whole Paris Agreement."
>
> —Laurence Tubiana, former French environment minister

emissions by 7 percent.) And yet the government wanted more. In the final hours of the negotiation, the Australian delegation demanded—on pain of scuttling the entire protocol—that changes in land use count toward emissions calculations. The rule has come to be known as the Australia clause.

Why land use? "There was a huge amount of land clearing that had happened in the years before 1990," explains Mark Howden, a professor at the Australian National University and a lead author on reports of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. More land clearing means more emissions from land use, but this is only temporary. Once the clearing is done, land use emissions steadily decrease over time. In other words, including land use emissions allowed Australia to measure its reductions from an artificially inflated starting point. The country could ramp up its fossil fuel use and rely on the expected decline in land use emissions to make the numbers look good.

That is precisely what happened. When land use figures are included, Australia emitted just 2.5 percent more in 2012 than it did in 1990—far less than its deceptive Kyoto goal. When land use figures are excluded, however, it emitted 28.3 percent more. And that figure does not include emissions from exported fossil fuels, a convention that greatly benefits Australia. The country's emissions will likely continue to rise in the years to come, since the Morrison government does not have a plan to invest in renewables beyond 2020, and the lone piece of federal climate legislation on the books, the Climate Solutions Fund, is set to receive a total of AU$2 billion over the next decade—about as much money as Amtrak receives in a single year from the US government. (In other words, not much.) To tout these figures as an accomplishment is an astonishing act of bad faith.

At the recent UN climate negotiations in Madrid, Australia went further still. In the 2015 Paris Agreement, it pledged to cut its emissions 26 to 28 percent compared with 2005 levels by 2030, which, according to the Climate Analytics, a nonprofit climate science and policy group, would translate to a mere 5 percent reduction from 1990 levels (excluding land use). But in Madrid, the Australian delegation insisted that the overshooting of its Kyoto pledge be counted toward the calculation of its reductions under the Paris Agreement. That way, Australia would need to cut its emissions by only 16 percent from 2005 levels to meet its Paris goal; the rest would come from its Kyoto credits. (Yet even if the Paris target is met in earnest, it will be wholly insufficient, since it is consistent with a rise in average global temperature of 2 to 3 degrees Celsius from preindustrial levels—well above the already dangerous goal of 1.5 degrees.)

This strategy, known as carrying over carbon credits from one treaty to another, is like accruing rollover minutes on one phone plan and then trying to use them with a different carrier. In Madrid, dozens of countries pleaded with Australia not to pursue its carryover policy, but Australia refused to budge. The ensuing anger was fierce. Laurence Tubiana, a former French environment minister and a key figure in the Paris negotiations, told the *Financial Times* after the Madrid conference that the carryover "is just cheating. Australia was willing in a way to destroy the whole system, because that is the way to destroy the whole Paris agreement."

So, a country that negotiated a commitment two decades ago to vastly increase its carbon emissions and then

SOMOS
ECOSOCIALISTAS
LISTA
MST
CA
IZQU

Nowhere to hide: With smoke from the fires detected thousands of miles away, activists protested outside the Australian Embassy in Buenos Aires.

proceeded to greatly increase them now wants to use that difference—from vast to great—to reduce its current reductions pledge, which it is not on track to meet, even with this creative accounting scheme. Small wonder that the 2020 Climate Change Performance Index ranked Australia last out of 61 high-emitting countries for its climate policies. On a scale of 100 possible points, the index awarded the Lucky Country a score of zero.

The Morrison government's response to the bushfires has prompted comparisons to the conservatives' response to mass shootings in the United States: insisting that now is not the time to "politicize" the issue, shrouding inaction beneath a veil of mourning, talking about tangential problems, and waiting it out. While the analogy is disturbingly apt, it doesn't go far enough because it doesn't capture the government's attempt to retroactively write climate action into Australia's past. Morrison is no longer saying that the country doesn't need to act on climate change. He is saying something far more sinister, that we have already acted. (And by "we," he means his own Liberal Party. On December 22, *The Guardian* reported that his government adjusted the way emissions are measured so that, projected backward, emissions during the previous three Labor governments increased, while emissions under the Liberal coalition declined.)

So far, there have been very few cracks in this Liberal front. In mid-December, the Liberal minister for environment in New South Wales, Matt Kean, broke ranks with his party to insist that the fires were linked to climate change and that "doing nothing is not a solution." For this remarkably mild admission, he was reprimanded by Australia's army of Rupert Murdoch–owned newspapers and by his own party. "We stand by everything we've said," a skittish press secretary in Kean's office assured me when I called to request an interview. "But as you can understand, we've had quite a week here." (He ultimately declined to be interviewed and has since gone silent on climate.)

Morrison is no longer saying Australia doesn't need to act on climate change. He's saying something far more sinister: We have already acted.

Still marching: A rally for climate action outside Sydney Town Hall in January.

We Demand a Govt. With a Plan for the future NOT Just Big Business!
SCO NOT CL ACT
CLIMATE EMERGENCY
HELL

TOP: GLEN MOREY / AP; BOTTOM: JENNY EVANS / GETTY IMAGES

NONE OF THIS WAS INEVITABLE. ONLY A DECADE ago, Australia was actually poised to lead on climate politics. In 2006, according to a poll conducted by the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, 68 percent of Australians agreed with the statement "Global warming is a serious and pressing problem" and "we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs." Politicians listened. In the 2007 election the Labor Party candidate, Kevin Rudd, campaigned on the promise of an emissions-trading scheme. So did John Howard, the Liberal incumbent who, a decade earlier, oversaw Australia's deceptive accounting at Kyoto. When Rudd won the election and formed a governing coalition with the Green Party, he set about negotiating an emissions-trading scheme with the Liberal opposition, led by Malcolm Turnbull. It looked as though there would be a genuine consensus on aggressive (if wholly market-driven) climate action.

Instead, negotiations over the

trading scheme fell apart. Then the Greens sided with the Liberals in voting against the final bill, claiming it was an insufficient response to climate change. (Labor has never forgiven the Greens for this; Greenhill, a Labor Party member, called the vote a "political stunt.") The Liberals became the party of climate denial, and public opinion shifted accordingly. By 2012, the Lowy poll showed 36 percent of Australians in favor of immediate, significant action on climate change—a more than 30 percentage point drop in just six years. (Since then, the figure has climbed steadily, reaching 61 percent in 2019, but it has yet to return to its 2006 benchmark.) Climate change became, as journalist Annabel Crabb wrote last year, "the most divisive issue of the Australian political century."

Meanwhile, Labor has spent the last decade toggling between appeals to its working-class base in Queensland—coal country—and demands for a stronger climate policy. Last May the party suffered a surprise loss to Morrison's Liberals in what was billed by some media outlets as a climate change election. Labor leaders maintain that the loss was not a refutation of their climate policies. "There were a few key factors about why we didn't win the election," Mark Butler, a Labor MP for Hindmarsh and the current shadow minister for climate change and energy, tells me. "Climate wasn't one of them." If the election had been "a referendum only about our climate policies," he insists, "I think you may well have seen a different result." But when I press him on this—Labor suffered key losses in Queensland, where the debate over whether to open the Adani coal mine was central to the election—Butler concedes that "even though our climate policy was not going to directly impact coal mines, there was this sort of sense that we didn't support their jobs."

THANK YOU FIRIES

Political theater: Images projected onto the Sydney Opera House in support of communities affected by the fires.

DON ARNOLD / GETTY IMAGES

When I ask the Climate Action Network's Richards what has driven this regression in climate policy, she immediately replies, "Two words: coal lobby." Coal looms over Australian politics and culture. Magnates like Gina Rinehart and Clive Palmer are easily recognized public figures. In the last election, Palmer poured AU$60 million into a smear campaign against Labor. They knew they'd have a friend in Morrison, who made his name in 2017 by presenting a lump of coal in Parliament, James Inhofe–style, and saying, "This is coal. Don't be afraid."

When I ask Julie-Anne Richards what has driven climate policy, she replies, "Two words: coal lobby."

DOTTED AGAINST THIS DIM BACKDROP ARE A FEW ironic points of light. Many of the public servants closest to the fires—like Naomi Brown and Greg Mullins—have called the government on its lies. "I think the whole country is being gaslighted right now," Brown tells me. In April she, Mullins, and 21 other former emergency service leaders founded the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action and wrote to the federal government warning of "increasingly catastrophic extreme weather events." They asked for bolstered emergency services and rapid climate action. Morrison refused to meet with them.

I met Brown and Mullins at a press conference in the Sydney Botanical Gardens. Standing in front of a fire truck, accompanied by four other former fire chiefs, they called the press conference to announce the formation of the emergency council on bushfires—with or without the prime minister. Mullins, the group's unofficial leader, told me gruffly, "I will not stand by as some politicians in denial ruin the world and this country." The event was a powerful image: six retired emergency leaders, their faces leathered from decades of firefighting and looking uncomfortable in their business suits, throwing their clout behind climate action.

There are protests, too. In Sydney the week before Christmas, I saw a gathering almost every day, from Extinction Rebellion die-ins to marches thousands strong across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to Morrison's residence. I attended one a few days after visiting Katoomba. The protesters, most of them under 25, kept up a rousing "Scomo, fuck you!" all the way to the prime minister's doorstep. It was not a joyful gathering. You could see, hear, and feel the anger.

But it was despondent anger, anger that came from the belief that no change in government would be enough at this point. "Not Labor, they're shit too!" someone shouted during a speech, prompting laughter and applause. Richards, who attended a march a few days earlier, told me she sensed the same thing. "The mood felt flat," she said. "People don't know what to do. They don't want to be resigned, but they're fighting that feeling."

It is not hard to see why. The fires are international news now, but how long can that last? Rain will come (eventually), and the press will move on. The next fire season might not be quite so bad; that is always the risk of relying too heavily on weather events to demonstrate climate change. And the government is cracking down on climate protests by threatening multiyear prison sentences for activists. "Perhaps this is going to be the moment when the climate crisis becomes real," I say to Mayor Greenhill on our drive up to the lookout in Katoomba. "Yeah," he responds with surprising bitterness and tugs the car roughly into a curve. "Then winter comes, and the bastards forget about it."

THERE IS A LINE FROM AN ESSAY THAT HAS STUCK with me throughout my time in Australia, lodged in my mind like a song lyric. The essay is "Truth and Politics" by Hannah Arendt. Writing in 1967, she asked why it was that lying seemed so much more prevalent in politics than "truthtelling: to say what is."

Her answer was that politics is at its core about "changing reality," breaking free from the world as it is and "beginning something entirely new." According to this definition, truth is a constraint on our ability to alter the conditions around us. "Seen from the viewpoint of politics, truth has a despotic character," she wrote. When a potential future turns into an actualized present, it acquires a "stubborn thereness" that places it beyond politics. It just is.

The political response to undesirable truths, Arendt feared, would be the lie—a weapon that extends our ability to change the world into an area that ought to remain beyond our agency. To lie "is clearly an attempt to change the record," she wrote, "and as such, it is a form of action." The liar "says what is not so because he wants things to be different from what they are—that is, he wants to change the world." Lying in politics, then, is action pointed in the wrong direction, not toward the future, which is up for grabs, but toward the present and the past.

That is the fear behind the hope in Australia. Far from providing more of an impetus for political action, the reality of the climate crisis may serve to make real action all the more inconceivable. In its place comes a perverse kind of climate action, a reaction: the Morrison government's attempt to wrench Australia's emissions record away from the factual and back into the political. "The past and the present are treated as parts of the future—that is, changed back into their former state of potentiality," Arendt warned. So with climate politics in Australia.

> To lie **"is clearly an attempt to change the record,** and as such, it is a form of action."
>
> —Hannah Arendt

Climate scientists warn of tipping points—thresholds that, once breached, could lead to irreversible changes in the global climate system. Tipping points are difficult to predict, although we now seem to be approaching some large-scale ones at a terrifying pace. But there are tipping points in climate politics, too, and we have arrived at one this summer in Australia. Which one, though? Will the fires send us mercifully toward the dramatic climate action that we now have only a decade to take? Or will they mark the moment when the climate crisis became too advanced to be altered and climate action became about cooking our books as our planet staggered toward untold dystopias? In the heat of the moment, it is hard to tell. But at the least it feels possible now to say that we are headed in one direction or the other—on the verge of a climate revolution or on the brink of a climate reaction.

Meanwhile, we are left with that strange dissonance, the world around us mocking the language we have built to name it. The line that has remained stuck in my head is the final sentence of "Truth and Politics": "Conceptually, we may call truth what we cannot change," wrote Arendt. "Metaphorically, it is the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us." Another metaphor that has now become real in Australia, where—in both senses—the ground is burning and the sky is full of smoke. ■

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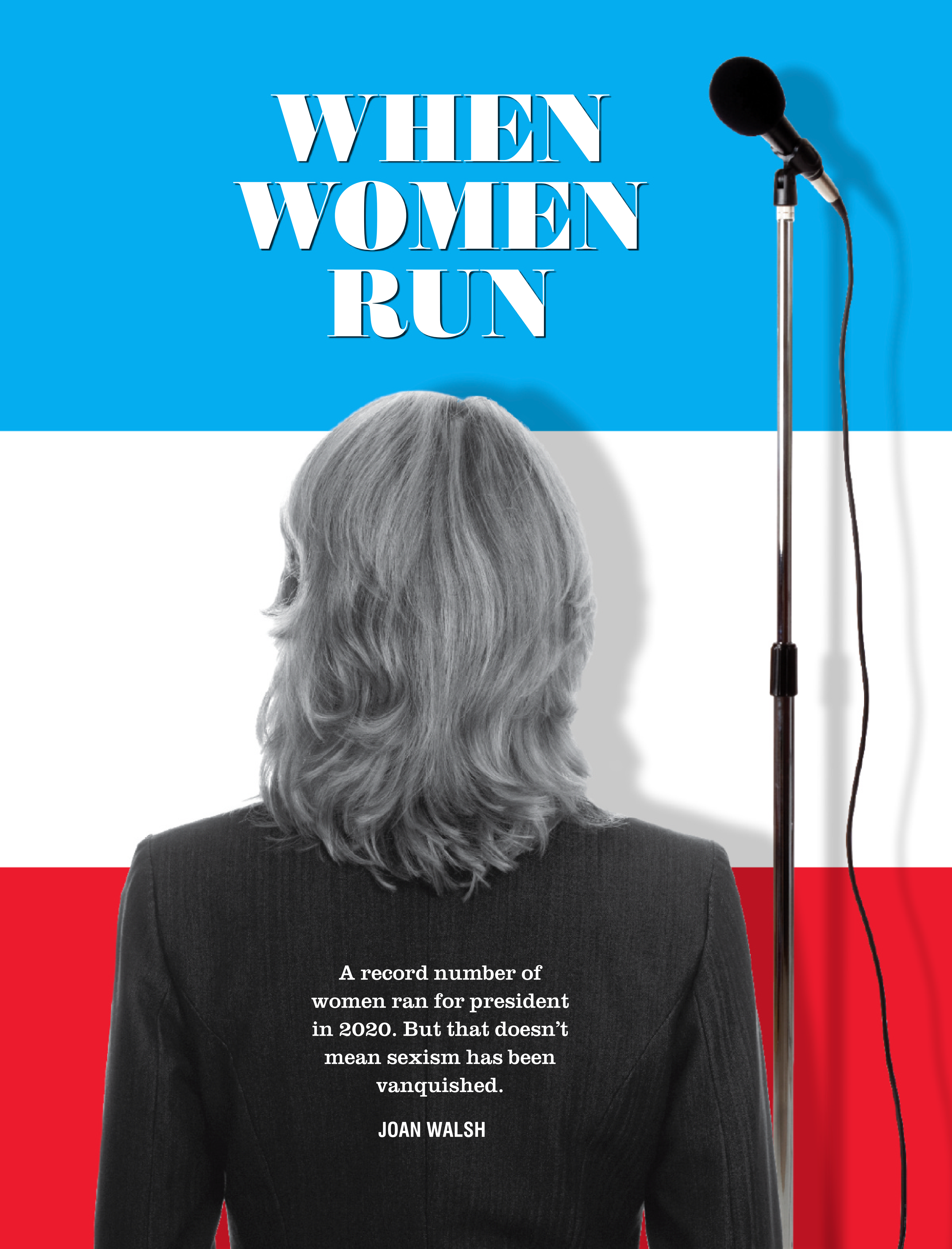
WHEN WOMEN RUN



A record number of women ran for president in 2020. But that doesn't mean sexism has been vanquished.

JOAN WALSH

THE 2020 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY BEGAN AS A THRILLING, HISTORIC political experiment with a field that included no fewer than six women, four of them popular US senators. It wasn't parity, but it was progress. A quarter of the 24 (or so) candidates running were women—roughly the same percentage as serve in Congress—and two were women of color.

While Hillary Clinton, the 2016 front-runner, became the Democratic nominee and ultimately won the popular vote, she was an anomaly: uniquely qualified and able to push almost all her challengers out of the race immediately but also uniquely wounded by her decades at the political front. 2020 would be different. In addition to the four senators—California's Kamala Harris, Massachusetts's Elizabeth Warren, Minnesota's Amy Klobuchar, and New York's Kirsten Gillibrand—we had New Age author Marianne Williamson and Hawaii's Representative Tulsi Gabbard, an Iraq War veteran. For the first time, we'd learn what happens when a group of women run against one another for the highest office in the land.

About a year later, just weeks before the Iowa caucuses, there were only six Democrats on the debate stage. All of them, unfortunately, were white, but one-third were women. That's a measure of good news, at least, for women, right?

Maybe. But when progressive women talk among ourselves, we talk—fiercely but quietly—about the sexism that has made this road harder for the female candidates. We check ourselves because of the "bleak paradox" *The New York Times*' Michelle Goldberg identified last year. As much as we want a female president, we believe that sexism played a big role in Clinton's loss, and we see it hurting the female candidates this time around, too. But the more we talk about it, the more we remind Democrats, male and female, that nominating another woman is a risk.

Then came the report that at a precampaign dinner in December 2018, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders told Warren that he didn't believe a woman could win the presidency. Initially, CNN cited anonymous sources; Sanders denied he said that, and he accused "staff who weren't in the room" of "lying about what happened." Then Warren confirmed the sources' story, saying in a statement, "I thought a woman could win; he disagreed." Within 24 hours, Sanders supporters, possibly amplified by trolls and bots, got #RefundWarren—a demand that she return donations from disappointed lefties—trending on Twitter.

For many feminists, Sanders's reported skepticism of Warren's chances seemed yet more proof of the headwinds against the ambitions of all the female candidates, which helped push two promising female senators (Gillibrand and Harris) out of the race early. As the backlash against Warren reminded us, the worst offense for a female candidate is to be—or to be called—a liar; the second worst is to be in danger of bringing down a popular male candidate.

> **"One of the things that make women 'unlikable' is ambition, but ambition is essential to running for president. It's a circle of hell that's hard to overcome."**
>
> —Margaret Sullivan, *The Washington Post*

No wonder former vice president Joe Biden said it so blithely in early January: Yes, Clinton faced "unfair" sexism (is there a fair kind?), but "that's not going to happen with me."

No, Joe, it won't.

THE RECORD CROP OF FEMALE CANDIDATES seemed to be the big story of 2020, but at first they struggled to get any attention at all. Instead we were treated to glowing profiles of young male upstarts like former Texas representative Beto O'Rourke, whose campaign debuted in *Vanity Fair*, and South Bend's Pete Buttigieg, an early media darling of *Vogue*. In March of last year, media critic Margaret Sullivan wrote in *The Washington Post* about the "potentially dangerous" ways media coverage of the "B-boys"—Beto, Biden, and Bernie—was eclipsing that of the four talented female senators in the race. (By the way, most women I've talked to agree that the most definitive proof of sexism in the 2020 race is the continued prominence of Buttigieg, a 38-year-old former small-city mayor, who unites us in the angry belief that no woman could get this far with a résumé so flimsy.)

The female candidates' early struggle to gain traction took a toll. Gillibrand, who fought to attract donors and never got above the low single digits in the polls, tried to emphasize her leadership on women's issues, particularly her fight against sexual assault in the military and her well-crafted proposal for paid family leave. But she dropped out in August, her candidacy mortally wounded by the perception that she (along with 33 other Senate Democrats, but who's counting?) railroaded popular Minnesota Senator Al Franken into resigning after eight serious allegations of sexual misconduct surfaced against him.

Then came the shocking departure in early December of Harris, who had immediately become a top-tier candidate with an impressive campaign launch that drew at least 20,000 people in Oakland a year ago and surged after a standout debate performance last June. She ran on a platform of pragmatic solutions for struggling families, including a refundable monthly $500 tax credit and federal funds to boost teachers’ salaries, but she changed her campaign themes multiple times and eventually ran out of funds to support an ambitious early-state campaign build-out. (On January 10—not unexpectedly, given that she was polling around zero—Marianne Williamson dropped out as well.)

For her part, Warren, the most popular female candidate, has faced a kaleidoscope of sexist slurs and jabs since announcing her candidacy nearly a year ago. 2019 began with some pundits and activists mocking her drinking a beer in an Instagram livestream; 2020 began with some of the same folks mocking her dancing onstage in Brooklyn with former housing and urban development secretary Julián Castro the night after he endorsed her. His endorsement should have been the focus of Warren’s news coverage that night, but it wasn’t. Let’s hope “But she danced” doesn’t become shorthand for sexist media myopia in 2020 the way “But her e-mails” did in 2016.

Warren has had major highs and lows, some of her own making. In early 2019 she was unfairly written off as another version of Clinton, “elitist” and not particularly “likable,” and continued to be hurt by her decision to use (legally meaningless) DNA test results to “prove” her claim to an infinitesimal genetic Native American ancestry. But as she got deeper into her campaign, her warm, one-on-one retail politics strategy, with the endless selfie lines and the pinkie swears promising little girls they can grow up to become president, combined with her bold ideas—a wealth tax, Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, free public college—and her myriad detailed plans for them made her a front-runner by the fall. She racked up a series of endorsements from a diverse list of grassroots groups and activists, including the Working Families Party, Black Womxn For, and Medicare for All activist Ady Barkan, as well as positive headlines in mainstream and progressive news outlets. By early October, she was basically tied with Biden for the national lead, according to the *RealClearPolitics* polling average, and placing high in the early primary states too, as Sanders slipped a bit and Harris lost her post-June-debate bump. But Warren began to fall almost immediately.

In 2016 it was “But her e-mails.” In 2020 will it be “But she danced”?

Paying a price: Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who framed herself as a champion of women’s issues, was hobbled by her perceived role in the resignation of Senator Al Franken.

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CAROLINE BREHMAN / CQ ROLL CALL

These days, she seems to have arrested her decline, hitting a plateau in most recent polls and landing in second place, behind Sanders, in the all-important *Des Moines Register*/CNN/Mediacom Iowa poll released on January 10. With an outstanding field staff and a decent amount of cash on hand, Warren remains a formidable top-tier candidate. Klobuchar, who has positioned herself as the get-it-done moderate in a field of dreamers, also endures in the second tier of credible candidates.

But all of the female candidates have been undermined by double standards. When I talk to other women about sexism in the 2020 race, the complaints fall into two categories. First, female candidates get hurt by going on the attack, while men generally don’t. Second, women get dogged to provide more details about their policy plans—and then get criticized for those details.

“It matters that women be both credentialed and likable,” said Emily’s List vice president for communications Christina Reynolds. “Men don’t have to be likable.” The *Post*’s Sullivan concurred, saying, “One of the things that make women ‘unlikable’ is ambition, but ambition is essential to running for president. It’s a circle of hell that’s hard to overcome.”

Another circle of hell: To be seen as credentialed, women often have to produce more-detailed policy proposals than men, whose legitimacy is generally presumed. “We expect more of women in order to be credentialed,” Reynolds noted. “They can’t get away with broad policy strokes. They need policy details. But then the details are where they get in trouble.”

LET’S START WITH THE PROBLEM OF GOING ON the attack. It’s expected of men, especially in this race, where it proves their macho bona fides against the bullying Trump. As I write, Sanders and Biden are hitting each other hard on their respective Iraq War histories, and the media covers it as business as usual. “Biden and Sanders Differ on Foreign Policy. They’re Happy to Tell You So,” announced a *New York Times* headline in early January, adding that both men seemed “energized” by the “renewed” debate. Yet women who go on the offensive, even with good cause, aren’t typically described as “energized” or “renewed.”

Gillibrand paid the price for her alleged aggression before she even declared her candidacy, in terms of her (widely exaggerated) role in prompting Franken’s resignation. The one breakout moment she had in a debate—when she unearthed a 1981 op-ed by Biden that opposed an expanded federal child care tax credit because it would contribute to “the deterioration of the family”—also cost her. She interpreted the op-ed as an attack on working women; Biden took her raising it as a personal attack on him. He struck back personally, citing not only his track record on women’s issues but also her support for his stances. “I came up with the It’s on Us proposal to see to it that women were treated more decently on college campuses,” he responded. “You came to Syracuse University with me and said it was wonderful.… I don’t know what’s happened, except that you’re now running for president.”

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A strong start: Senator Kamala Harris's campaign launch in Oakland drew 20,000 people, catapulting her into the top tier of candidates. Eleven months later, she dropped out of the race.

Many pundits thought she had been unfair to Biden. In *The Washington Post*, Jonathan Capehart argued that Gillibrand "totally mischaracterized" Biden's op-ed. Joe Pinsker in *The Atlantic* argued that "the truth is a little murkier" than her attack. The op-ed was ideologically bizarre, but Biden indeed characterized day care as a way for parents to avoid the "individual responsibility" of raising their children. While reaching back almost 40 years for a hit on Biden may have made Gillibrand look a little desperate, for feminists, it felt like a fair-game example of the former vice president's uneven evolution on matters related to questions of gender and family. After all, he supported the Hyde Amendment, which bars Medicaid funding for abortion, until about six months ago. But what I scored as a clear win for Gillibrand at least partly backfired. A few weeks later, she dropped out of the race.

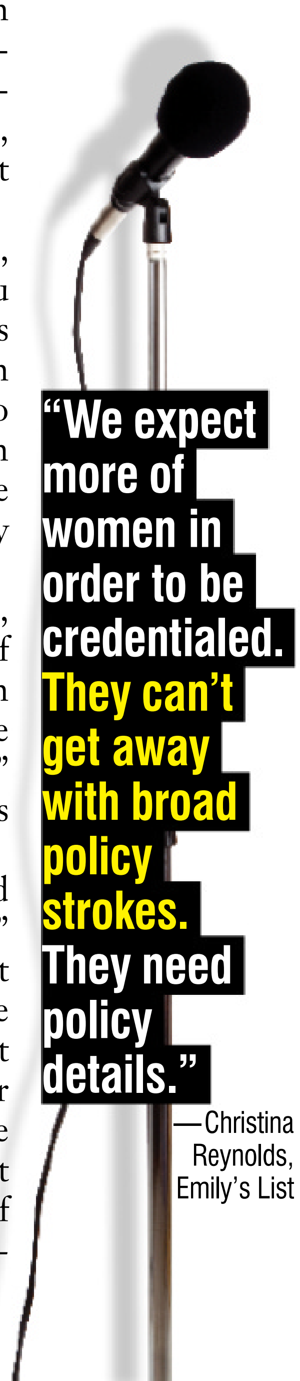
Similarly, when Harris took on Biden, it buoyed her in the polls temporarily but cost her in the end. In June he got criticism for touting his early-career work with segregationist Senate colleagues like James Eastland and Herman Talmadge. In Biden's most cringe-worthy statement on the subject, he kvelled that Eastland "never called me 'boy.' He always called me 'son.'" The fact that "boy" is a slur traditionally reserved for black men went mostly unremarked by Biden. Reporters reminded us that he worked with segregationists on federal legislation to squelch court-ordered busing plans. New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, at that point still a presidential candidate, went after Biden for his work with segregationists, and Biden came in for criticism when he demanded that Booker apologize to him.

At the first Democratic debate, in late June 2019, Harris made her stand, saying, "It was hurtful to hear you talk about the reputations of two United States senators who built their reputations and career on the segregation of race in this country…. You also worked with them to oppose busing." She went on, "There was a little girl in California who was part of the second class to integrate her public schools, and she was bused to school every day." Then the closer: "That little girl was me."

Harris was quickly named the winner of the debate, and for a time, she climbed in the polls. Aimee Allison of She the People, which advocates for women of color in politics, was moved to tears by Harris's story. "I felt like it showed she was uniquely prepared to lead the nation," Allison said, "explaining how our rights and protections have been traded away by both parties."

But the backlash began almost immediately. It turned out Harris's campaign had a "That little girl was me" T-shirt ready to go, as well as a tweet to promote it during the debate. "That was a bridge too far for some people," Sullivan recalled, incredulous. "It should not be a surprise that a candidate for president has a zinger prepared for a debate, as well as a tweet or two and maybe even some merchandise! But in some people's minds, it made Harris too calculating." Allison said, "It was as if she didn't have a right to tell her story." *The Washington Times* labeled Harris "the angry black presidential candidate."

Biden hit Harris the way he'd hit Gillibrand—personally. "I was prepared for them to come after me, but I wasn't prepared for the person coming at me the way she came at me," he told CNN, reducing Harris to "the person." Then he lowered the boom, invoking his son Beau Biden, a former Delaware attorney general who died of brain cancer in 2015 and to whom Harris was close. "She knew Beau. She knows me." (At least Joe Biden didn't turn that into a T-shirt.) A full month after the debate, the Biden campaign and its surrogates were still crusading against her perfidy, summed up in the July 27 *Washington Post* headline "'Beau's flipping in his grave': Biden supporters say Harris's attacks betray her relationship with his son." The piece crackled with recrimination, a fire that spread as countless Biden defenders told the same stories to countless political reporters. Her campaign made mistakes, but it arguably wasn't punished for any of them as harshly as it was for her Biden critique.



"We expect more of women in order to be credentialed. They can't get away with broad policy strokes. They need policy details."

—Christina Reynolds, Emily's List

MEANWHILE, WARREN, STEADILY RISING IN the polls, was able to avoid attacking her rivals. She came in for some criticism for her sassy response to a question about how she would answer a theoretical homophobic voter who believed marriage was "between one man and one woman." She said she'd tell him that he should feel free to "marry one woman" and added jokingly, "assuming you can find one." As *New York*'s Rebecca Traister noted, "Lots of people loved it. The clip went viral." But some men weren't so thrilled. *The Washington Post*, calling Warren's quip "acerbic," quoted Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf, who characterized it as "a battle cry for men to turn out against" her.

However, after Warren hit her early October polling high, she came under attack from some of the other candidates in the October 15 debate. Klobuchar and Buttigieg criticized her for failing to explain how she'd pay for Medicare for All, and Biden insisted she give

NOAH BERGER / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

him credit for whipping votes for the Consumer Financial Protect Bureau (which reporting suggests he didn't do). *The Washington Examiner* called her an "unlikeable," "petty," "ivory-tower elitist." O'Rourke branded her as "punitive" in how she talked about the wealthiest people in the country, even as he agreed that a wealth tax could be necessary. None of those are good looks for women.

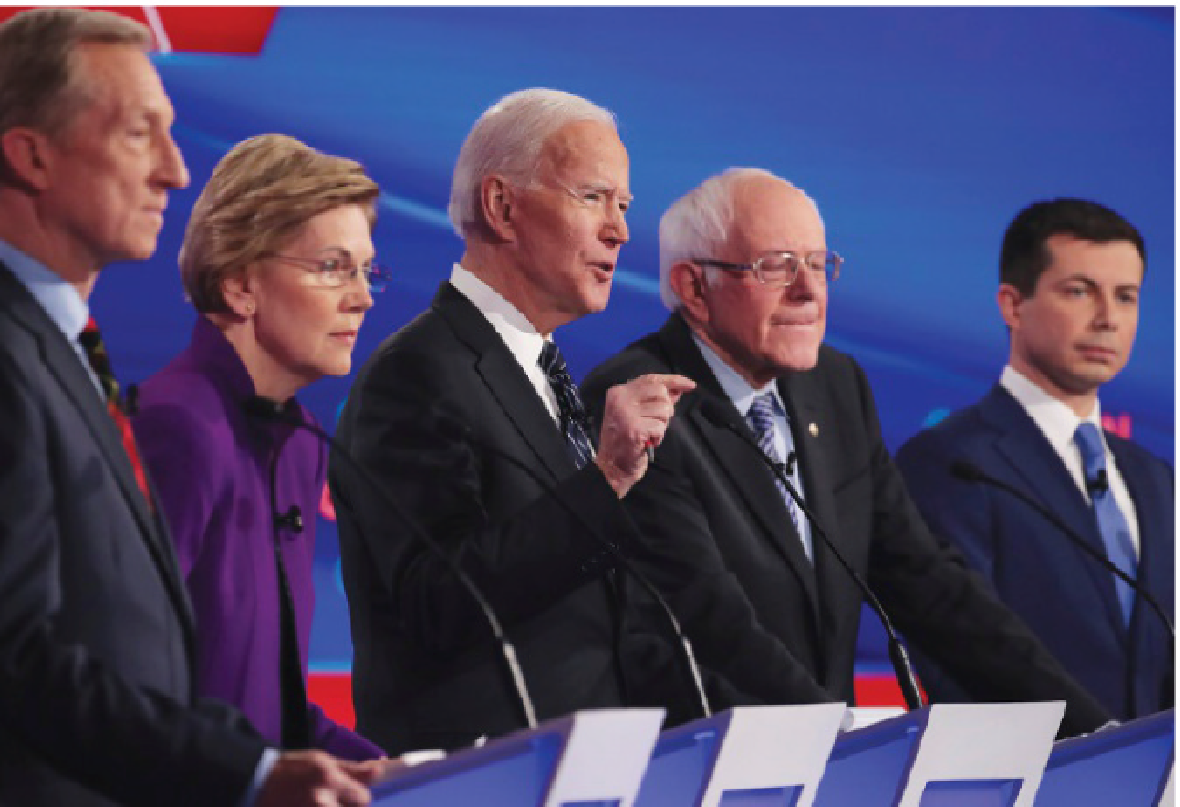
By the December 19 debate, Warren was going on the attack, too. She took on the rising Buttigieg for the fundraiser he held in a "wine cave" and for his overall reliance on wealthy donors and closed-door donor events. She faced an immediate backlash, with reporters revealing that she held pricey fund-raisers with big donors when she ran for the Senate in 2012 and 2018. She has never denied participating in the corrupting farce of big-donor politics; why she gave it up for her 2020 run is a key component of her campaign pitch. But she was depicted as a hypocrite nonetheless.

Just a couple of weeks later, *Politico* reported that she was waving the white flag: "Warren ends wine cave offensive." Damaged by her attacks on Buttigieg (who, it should be acknowledged, declined in the polls over the last month), she avoided critiquing him directly when asked about his fundraising haul and began returning her focus to policy. *Politico* reported that even some Warren supporters found her foray into negativity "disappointing."

But if attacks can backfire, staying in your lane and playing nice with policy questions can hurt women, too. Harris stumbled more than once in explaining her stance on health care, first saying she would get rid of private insurance, then backtracking. By the time she announced her own plan, which would have maintained heavily regulated private insurance if people chose it, she'd lost the messaging war, even as many experts praised her combination of a high-standard private option in a mostly public system, implemented with a longer transition period than Sanders's plan would provide. She was branded a flip-flopper on private insurance and dinged for having an inadequate grasp of her own health care policy, with *Jacobin* railing against her "phony Medicare for All plan."

Warren may have been even more damaged by her Medicare for All rollout than Harris was, at least partly because policy and plans are supposed to be Warren's thing. First she was attacked for not admitting that her plan would hike middle-class taxes. Then in November she got specific: She proposed that employers pay the government 98 percent of what they currently pay for private insurance, plus a financial transaction tax and other corporate tax hikes. Sanders described the employer contribution as a "head tax" that would hurt employers of lower-wage workers, and his supporters didn't like that she proposed starting with a public option and building in more time for the transition away from private insurance. So while she has been hit by the left for her go-slower approach as well as her funding plan, the media has mainly focused on how and when she would phase out private insurance. On CNN's *State of the Union* in early January, host Jake Tapper asked Warren repeatedly whether private insurance would be banned by the end of her first term, though that would take a vote of Congress, and neither Warren nor Sanders can promise in the end that there will be at least 60 votes in the Senate for Medicare for All. Warren tried to tout the things she could do with executive orders and budget reconciliation rules, but she and Tapper wound up talking past each other, and she came off as evasive.

After coming under attack by Harris and Gillibrand, Biden fought back—in personal terms.



CAROLINE BREHMAN / CQ ROLL CALL

Head to head: Once Elizabeth Warren became a front-runner, she came under fire from other candidates. When she punched back, she was criticized for it.

Sanders has benefited from consistency, as well as the fact that he said up front his plan would require a middle-class tax hike. But he has also benefited from leaving his plan vague and getting a pass on it. Could you imagine a world in which he is dogged at every interview with questions about how much taxes would go up and for whom exactly? He is not. As he said to *The Washington Post*'s Robert Costa, "I don't give a number and I'll tell you why: It's such a huge number and it's so complicated that if I gave a number you and 50 other people would go through it and say, 'Oh....'"

While we're on health care, Buttigieg's "Medicare for All Who Want It" has a nice ring of the voluntary—for whoever wants it? Great!—but it would be far from voluntary. His plan would not only institute a version of the Obama administration's individual mandate, which was repealed under the Trump administration; if people failed to find their own insurance, it would enroll them in health care coverage and charge them at the end of the year. Public policy expert Matt Bruenig, a Sanders supporter, described it as a "supercharged" version of Obama's "unpopular" mandate to *The Washington Post* in an article that ran on Christmas Eve and got no significant follow-up. The truth is that no one knows exactly how Buttigieg's plan would work, and almost no one asks him.

Meanwhile, Biden's public-option plan would put people into a government plan similar to Medicare, which isn't specified. He backs an individual mandate, too. But he hasn't yet spelled out how it would be enforced, and few reporters are grilling him. "The scant coverage that Biden's plan received," Libby Watson wrote in *The New Republic*, "failed to spark much of a broader conversation, despite the fact that there's been a near constant demand placed on Medicare for All proponents to show how that plan would be financed. This is madness." And the madness has continued right up to the eve of the first votes in Iowa and New Hampshire.

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> ***"Even before starting this trip, I knew it would be exceptional. Reading material was provided and a pre-travel phone conference primed us for this trip. Much more than just seeing artifacts, it attempts to understand Russia and her relationship with the rest of the world, especially the USA. I wanted to get past the American propaganda about Russia. We met Russians who talked about the issues, problems, and history of their country. I want the USA to have better relations with Russia and felt we were part of a delegation to help bridge those relations. I would do this trip again."***
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> *—Werner R. (September 2019 traveler)*

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THE Nation. TRAVELS

I HAD ALREADY BEEN WRITING ABOUT THE WAY SEXISM IS PLAYING out in the 2020 race when the Sanders-Warren dustup became public. It was painful, but at least it provided some clarity. Suddenly we were talking publicly about the way perceptions of electability hold women back. Not talking about it hadn't worked to eliminate it.

To me, it seemed possible that both progressive senators could be telling their version of the truth: Sanders, gruff and blunt, might well think he was just speaking honestly when he told Warren (as he admitted he did) that the sexist Trump will weaponize gender against her. Warren, who has repeatedly been told her gender is a disadvantage in running for office, heard a bleak confirmation: Yet another man—one who is generally an ally—doesn't believe a woman can win the presidency. But we'll likely never know precisely what was said; they were the only two people in the room.

At first, appallingly, the backlash seemed to hit Warren, who was cast as a liar by Sanders's supporters and even some of his campaign officials. First, #RefundWarren took over Twitter; after the debate, Sanders backers began using a snake emoji in tweets about her, which seemed to hark back to misogyny's origin story, in which Eve listened to the serpent and got herself and poor Adam evicted from the Garden of Eden. Warren got blamed for leaking the story on the eve of the last pre-Iowa debate, when in fact, reporters have been chasing the story for a while, and *The Intercept*'s Ryan Grim tweeted that Warren told him the leak wasn't intentional.

Warren was backed into a corner: She had to either confirm the story or call her colleagues liars. Sanders campaign manager Faiz Shakir predicted the latter when he told reporters, "We need to hear from her directly, but I know what she would say—that it is not true, that it is a lie." Instead Warren said it *was* true, in a statement that also praised Sanders and urged that they put the issue behind them.

When it came up at the Des Moines debate, Warren was ready and turned the electability question on its head. "Look at the men on this stage. Collectively, they have lost 10 elections. The only people on this stage who have won every single election that they've been in are the women—Amy and me." And the same had been true of the other two female senators who ran for president: Harris and Gillibrand had likewise won every race they'd entered, until 2020.

The crowd cheered; Warren had slain the electability monster. Or had she? On the one hand, it's a little depressing that those four female senators had to have perfect electoral records in order to run for president when the men surely didn't. On the other, Warren reminded us that despite the obstacles, women know how to win.

"Yes, women face sexism. Women also run and win," said Christina Reynolds, pointing to the 23 Democratic women who flipped House of Representative seats in 2018, as well as those who have helped statehouses trend blue ever since 11 women nearly flipped the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017. Elizabeth Warren "is right. Democratic women outperformed men in #election2018," tweeted Kelly Dittmar of the Center for American Women and Politics, whose research proved it.

For all this progress, we still haven't shattered "the highest, hardest glass ceiling," as Hillary Clinton famously described the presidency (even though she proved a woman could get almost 3 million more votes than a man—and still lose, thanks to the ultimate institution protecting white male privilege, the Electoral College). As I write, Warren and Klobuchar are still in the fight. For better or worse, we're now past the point of trying to downplay the double standards that women face. And we'll know more about them, because of the women who chose to compete in this inspiring, bewildering, and occasionally enraging Democratic primary. ■

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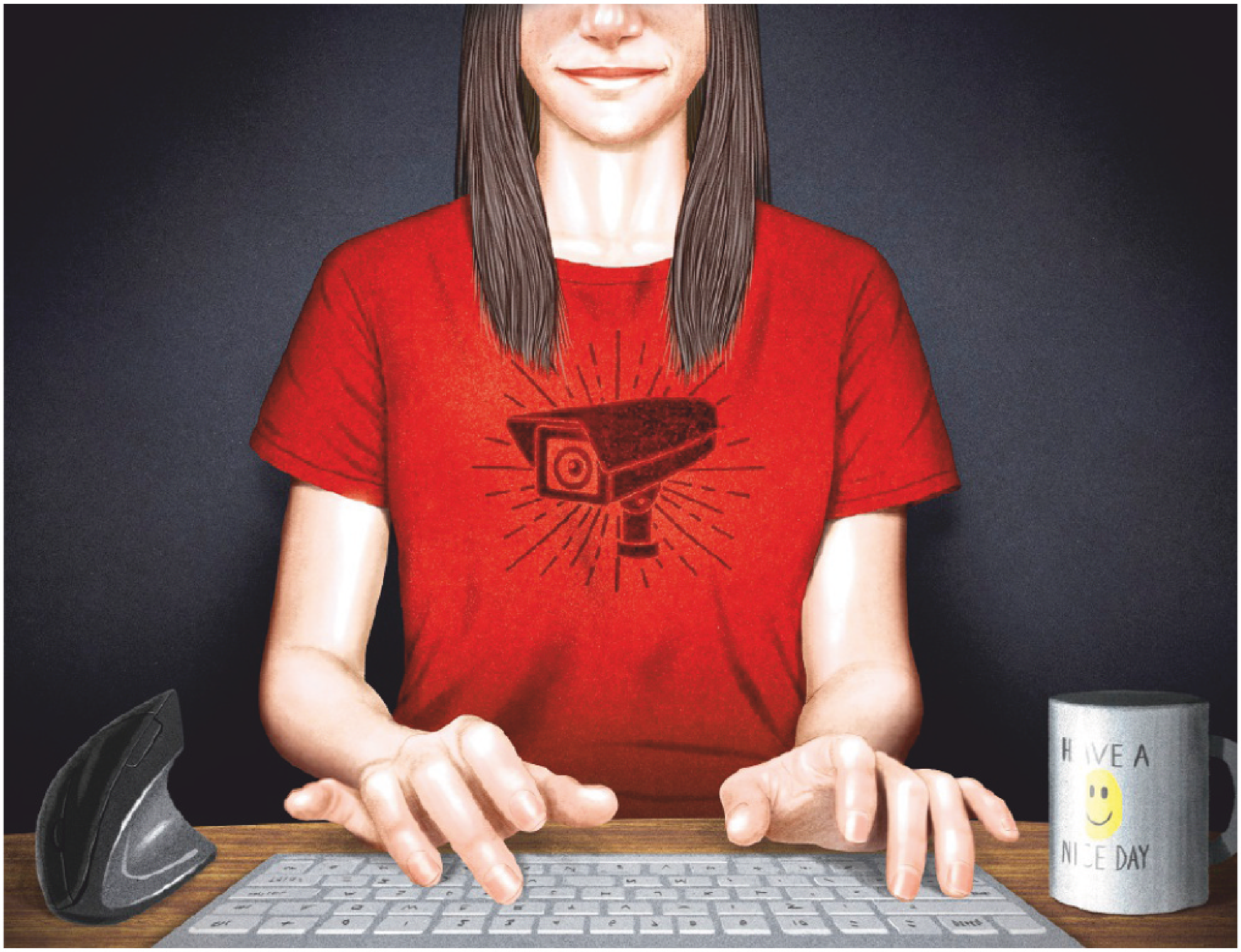


GOD MODE

Five years in Silicon Valley

by KEVIN LOZANO

I used to work at a large multinational media corporation that desperately wanted to be a tech start-up. "Data," "metrics," and "product" were the terms du jour: They drove, however ambiguously or cynically, many of the decisions made by the magazine makers and website producers who paid me to line-edit what throughout the industry is now simply called "content." The company's coders were poached from prestigious firms to build publishing-focused software, and their offices, located a few floors below ours, offered a cornucopia of amenities that exceeded those of the "content producers": They had higher salaries, nicer workstations, the presumption of job security, and free snacks. They seemed to be trusted with the future of the company, responsible for creating tools to help us publish our stories and decode the data that came back to us about our readers. In meeting after meeting, low-ranking executives, accompanied by these code jockeys, would instruct editors on how to game SEO and social media algorithms, reminding us about the need to remain vigilant in the face of an ever-changing media landscape. No one really seemed to know how to fix the ailing media company, but that didn't prevent anyone from religiously paying tithes to the very technologies undermining our shared industry.

When I wasn't at work stressing out over the ticker counters that gave value to my toil, I was still trapped in this world. I looked at my feeds when I woke up, trawling through the news, memes, and life events; I swiped between photos of strangers on dating apps; and I signed away the rights to my privacy and image with each new app I downloaded. Sometimes I would accept

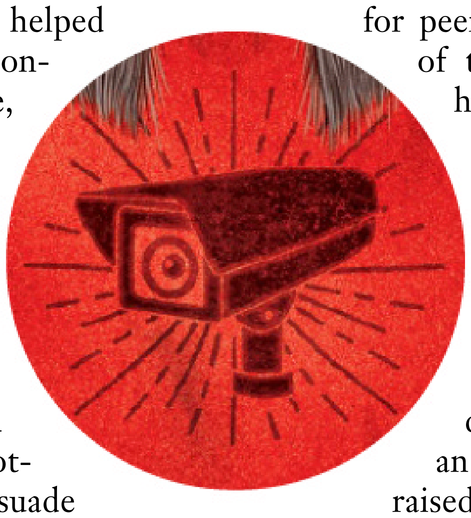
ILLUSTRATION BY **JASON RAISH**

invitations to parties from friends on the very social media apps that were ruining my industry, and I would find myself in penthouses owned by early employees of what were known in the tech world as “unicorns”—start-ups with a valuation of $1 billion or more. Feeling flattered and, at the same time, guilty to be invited, I would spend a lot of time gawking at the excess: free drugs, alcohol, and hired help. I would think that no one, especially no twentysomethings, should be this rich. I still partook in the luxuries on offer. Surrounded by my college-educated peers who had done the smart thing and sold out, I wondered if being an editor and writer was worth the trouble. I knew I wasn’t alone in this, because a lot of my friends who came of economic age after 2008 were asking the same thing. Precarious, overeducated, and complicit in a rigged economic system we knew was undermining our own work, we wondered why we hadn’t all sent in job applications to the next hot tech company. (I did, to be honest, and was rejected.)

Uncanny Valley
A Memoir
By Anna Wiener
MCD. 276 pp. $27

In *Uncanny Valley*, a remarkable memoir of her nearly five years working in San Francisco’s start-up scene, Anna Wiener tells us what happens when you do end up in the tech world—and about the anguish it has caused. A liberal-arts-educated East Coaster and erstwhile denizen of New York’s literary scene, Wiener provides an achingly relatable and sharply focused firsthand account of how a set of “ambitious, aggressive, arrogant young men from America’s soft suburbs,” backed by vast capital investments and armed with data analytics technology, helped to refashion not just our economy but also our culture, aesthetics, and politics with the new digital tools they produced.

At the center of Wiener’s narrative is a story about a generation: For her, the great innovation of the young people behind the continuing second dot-com bubble has been to persuade the rest of the world to fetishize the prophetic power of data and to get us to trade away privacy for optimization. But as an employee guiltily benefiting from this gold rush, she gives us a cautionary tale about the dangerous work cultures these tech companies cultivated as well. While warning about the collection of data and the way it reaffirms some of the most invidious forms of inequality in our society, she examines how tech companies were run on a toxic cocktail of misogyny, prejudice, and rampant surveillance. Unlike several other recent nonfiction dispatches from Silicon Valley, her book is less interested in making sense of the tech boom through the eyes and foibles of start-up founders and more concerned with asking questions from the point of view of the young people they employed. Although her memoir charts her eventual escape from this world, it also reminds us that even if we don’t work in tech and refuse to engage with the world that start-ups have created, we still need something far greater than rejection to resolve these issues. In this way, Wiener’s book, while not explicitly political, gives us a road map to the ways we can turn our growing dissatisfaction with what tech has wrought into the backbone of an ideology.



Before 2013, when she plunged headfirst into the start-up scene, Wiener was an assistant at a middling Manhattan-based literary agency, making $30,000 a year without benefits. This kind of job is not unfamiliar to anyone who has worked in publishing or journalism. It’s an effective dead end: Often the only forms of advancement come from extrinsic forces. One could, as Wiener notes, move up by being able to “[inherit] money, marry rich, or wait for peers to defect or die.” None of these seemed likely to be happening soon, so she began to wonder if securing advance reader copies and enjoying the shabby glow of cultural capital—even while scraping to pay the rent each month—was really enough. Then one day she read an article about an e-book start-up that had raised $3 million in seed funding.

The start-up’s mild form of disruption was simple: Seeking to turn once public goods like library books into a private, curated service, it planned to offer “access to a sprawling library of e-books for a modest monthly fee.” For Wiener, the money that might come from working at such a company had its appeal, and this particular start-up offered the chance to retain a connection to the analog world she loved, so she wanted in. No one can live off “taste and integrity” alone, she tells us, and when she was offered a three-month trial run with the company, she accepted.

Working as a kind of do-it-all assistant for the company’s four-person team, Wiener spent her days not learning a new profession but instead buying the employee snacks, writing copy for the website, and trying to lend her literary taste and expertise to a group of boys who did not really seem to care all that much about books. In one pitch presentation the CEO asked the staffers to consult on, she notes—to herself—that he spelled “Hemingway” wrong. In the same pitch, the CEO insisted that books are not really the point of the app they’re selling; they are monetizing a kind of lifestyle. As Weiner writes, the CEO and by extension his cofounders never really “acknowledged that the reason millennials might be interested” in buying (really renting) these experiences no longer linked to physically owning books had anything to do with “student loan debt, or the recession, or the plummeting market value of cultural products in an age of digital distribution.” They were just worried about making money.

As her trial period ended, Wiener could see she was a bad fit not just with this start-up but maybe with all start-ups. She was criticized for being too nice and not assertive enough (criticisms that followed her on her journey). She wrote the e-book boys a long, heartfelt e-mail hoping to convince them that her skills were indispensable, but they let her go anyway. The guys felt bad—they meant well, after all!—and helped her parlay her experience into an interview with a start-up they thought was more exciting than their own: a data analytics company in San Francisco that industry chatter had anointed as the next unicorn.

Wiener flew to San Francisco, and after a rather humiliating interview (she was given an LSAT practice test because the interviewer didn’t have any questions for her), she landed a customer support gig that would pay her double what she made as a literary assistant. If fitting in was the problem at her first start-up job, Wiener soon realized that she had a whole new world to master: Leaving aside the strange tech lingo and office rituals, the company she was about to work for, with its sexist and often classist workplace, would reveal how rotten the Internet industry had become. The two years she eventually spent at the analytics start-up were an eye-opener not just for her; the period also charted how

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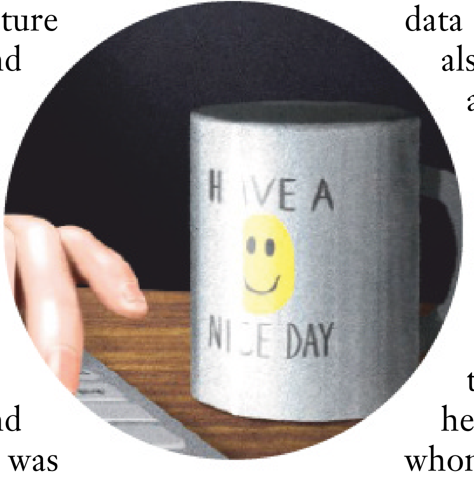
PROCEEDS SUPPORT *THE NATION'S* JOURNALISM an industrywide, government-supported embrace of data collection rewired the US economy and redefined life both on- and offline.

Wiener left New York for San Francisco at just the right moment—at least for a young person with literary aspirations. In 2013, Penguin and Random House merged to become one of the largest publishing companies in the world, employing about 10,000 people, commanding a combined value of over $2 billion, and creating a vast conglomerate that could affect the livelihoods of smaller houses, writers, and workers around the planet. But the mega publishing house was no match for what else was happening in the US economy. Not long before, Facebook went public with a valuation north of $100 billion, and Amazon facilitated one-half of all book sales. Amazon was also running an even more "lucrative sister business," Wiener writes, of "selling cloud-computing services—metered use of a sprawling, international network of server farms—which provided the back-end infrastructure for other companies' websites and apps." In earlier eras, this kind of infrastructure might have been built by and for the public, but now it was privately owned and rented out, making it "nearly impossible to use the internet at all without enriching" Amazon. In the ecosystem Wiener was about to immerse herself in, Amazon's ruthless and ingenious business model was much admired and provided a way to understand the world that start-ups were helping to create. It operated with the idea that there was no "crisis" in this vision of the future, "only opportunities."



Wiener's new start-up job focused on helping the data analytics company's clients troubleshoot problems with the implementation of the company's products, a powerful suite of tools designed to help websites and apps collect user data. Quickly, Wiener realized the tools for data collection weren't the only things for sale. For the company's clients, user data, as much as any of the services on offer, was itself a valuable good that could be packaged and sold. "The right findings," Wiener tells us, "could be golden, inspiring new products, or revealing user psychology, or engendering ingenious, hypertargeted advertising campaigns." To turn these insights into an economic windfall, the analytics start-up divided the data that its clients collected into highly granular morsels. Clients could break down and segment user engagement in a way that enabled them to predict user behavior and either sell this information to other companies or retain it for their own projects.

The start-up's employees were expected not to snoop around the private information that they were enabling clients to collect. But by using a setting called "God mode," Wiener implies, she and her colleagues could easily "look up individual profiles of our lovers and family members and co-workers in the data sets belonging to dating apps and shopping services and fitness trackers and travel sites" that worked with the start-up. Even if there was an ironclad rule against such prying, Wiener continues, she'd heard stories of people at other start-ups not acting with such discretion. At a ride-sharing company, employees would frequently "search customers' ride histories, tracking the travel patterns of celebrities and politicians."

With this power at her disposal, Wiener not only learned how widespread data collection had become but also began to grow a bit paranoid. "It wasn't the act of data collection" that gave her pause, she writes; she was already resigned to that. What disturbed her was "the people who might see [her data] on the other end—people [like her]." She "never knew with whom [she] was sharing" information, and soon she began to see how the collection was not just a business strategy but something far more dangerous. It created a wealth of unchecked power for those companies that ended up with its vatic information. If they could predict user preferences and behavior, they could also manipulate the entire economy.

Still, in her early days at the analytics company, Wiener tried to brush away many of these fears. The money was just too good, and for the first time in her adult life she was saving and climbing a career ladder. Even when a grave new development connected Silicon Valley with the upper echelons of the US government's War on Terrorism, she didn't at first see how the work she did was implicated.

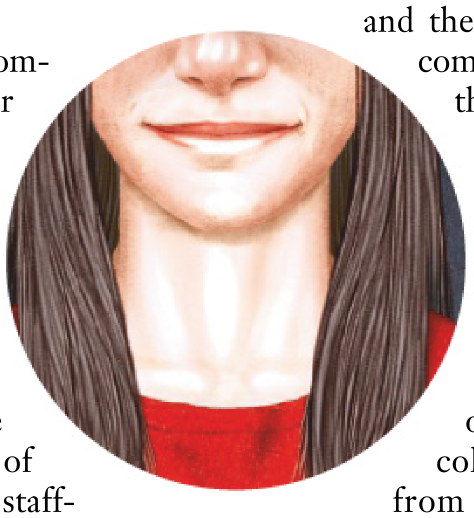
On the day Edward Snowden's NSA leaks became public, Wiener and her coworkers weren't particularly interested: "In general, we rarely discussed the news, and we certainly weren't about to start with this story. We didn't think of ourselves as participating in the surveillance economy. We weren't thinking about our role in facilitating and normalizing the creation of unregulated, privately held databases on human behavior." But Wiener's growing unease was vindicated. Not only corporations but our government (and others around the world) were now wielding these powers to spy on their citizens and enemies alike on a scale never seen before. "We facilitated the collection of the information," a former coworker tells her, "and we have no idea how it will be used and by whom. For all we know, we could have been one subpoena away from collaborating with intelligence agencies. If the reports are accurate, the veil between ad tech and state surveillance is very thin."

After the Snowden revelations, things began to sink in for Wiener, and *Uncanny Valley* tracks each step she took in connecting the dots. She moves from the rise of cloud computing ("The idea of the cloud, its implied transparency and ephemerality, concealed the physical reality: the cloud was just a network of hardware, storing data indefinitely. All hardware could be hacked") to the links between corporations and the US national security state ("The servers of global technology companies had been penetrated and pillaged by the government. Some said the technology companies had collaborated wittingly") to the terrible version of the Internet we all live with now. And while these passages can illuminate for readers the intersections they might not already know, they carry a tinge of paranoia that can veer into near–conspiracy theory. But in fairness to Wiener, she makes clear how jobs like hers incentivize people to be ignorant of the world around them. "It was perhaps a symptom of my myopia, my sense of security, that I was not thinking about data collection as one of the moral quandaries of our time," she writes. "For all the industry's talk about scale, and changing the world, I was not thinking about the broader implications. I was hardly thinking about the world at all."

Apart from her growing fear of the dangerous implications of data collection, Wiener was also confronted with the arrogance, classism, and misogyny of Silicon Valley's workplaces. Without the aggression and petulance of a workplace culture that compared everything to conquest and brutality, she suggests, her colleagues might have paused to consider whether the products they worked on were directly connected to industry or government surveillance programs.

At the data analytics company, in particular, Wiener got a crash course in the bullying rhetoric and office culture of the start-up world. The company's internal slogan, "Down for the cause," was used to chastise her and her coworkers if they failed to live up to the vague mandates of growth and devotion. The staffers were haunted by the company's oracular CEO, an Indian American college dropout who talked almost exclusively in the language of war. After one happy hour hosted by the company, a coworker attempted to grope Wiener in the backseat of a cab. Another colleague made a pass at her in the middle of the workday and told her that he "loves dating Jewish women" because they are "so sensual." While such workplace abuses are widespread across all industries, Wiener shows how the casual misogyny and truculence of her workplace—and tech businesses in general—are two of the reasons the Internet has become an unwelcoming place for women, people of color, and those who are down and out. Having refashioned the Internet in their image, start-up executives have made it a hostile environment for everyone else.

Wiener eventually moved on to a third start-up, where she worked as a kind of content moderator, trawling reports of "pornography or neo-Nazi drivel" and determining if the posters violated the company's free speech policies. For Wiener, this work proved to be the breaking point. The way her peers in tech treated San Francisco was another. On an unnamed blogging platform, a varying set of "engineers and aspiring entrepreneurs" captures the general mood among pigheaded tech bros there. In one post, a man compared the city's temperamental weather to "a woman who is constantly PMSing." In another, a tech dude joked about "monetizing homeless people by turning them into Wi-Fi hotspots" and excoriated the poor for "clinging to rent control and driving up condo prices." One of her first realizations about her new home—and the one that stuck with her throughout her years there—was the depth of its contrasts: "I had never seen such a shameful juxtaposition of blatant suffering and affluent idealism."



For Wiener, the city, the workplace, and the Internet had an appalling commonality. Wrapped up in the start-up machismo about disruption so prevalent in all these spaces was a stomach-churning disgust for the poor, for women, for basically anyone not employed by a tech company. The coders—many of whom were white and college-educated and were from middle-class homes—preferred a world that reflected their own comforts and needs and then projected those preferences not only into the workplaces that Wiener and many other women and people of color had to share with them but also into the technologies and surveillance tools that helped drive the economy. "Silicon Valley might have promoted a style of individualism," Wiener observes, but its scale "bred homogeneity. Venture-funded, online-only, direct-to-consumer retailers had hired chatty copywriters to speak to the affluent and overextended.... Homogeneity was a small price to pay for the erasure of decision fatigue. It liberated our minds to pursue other endeavors, like work."

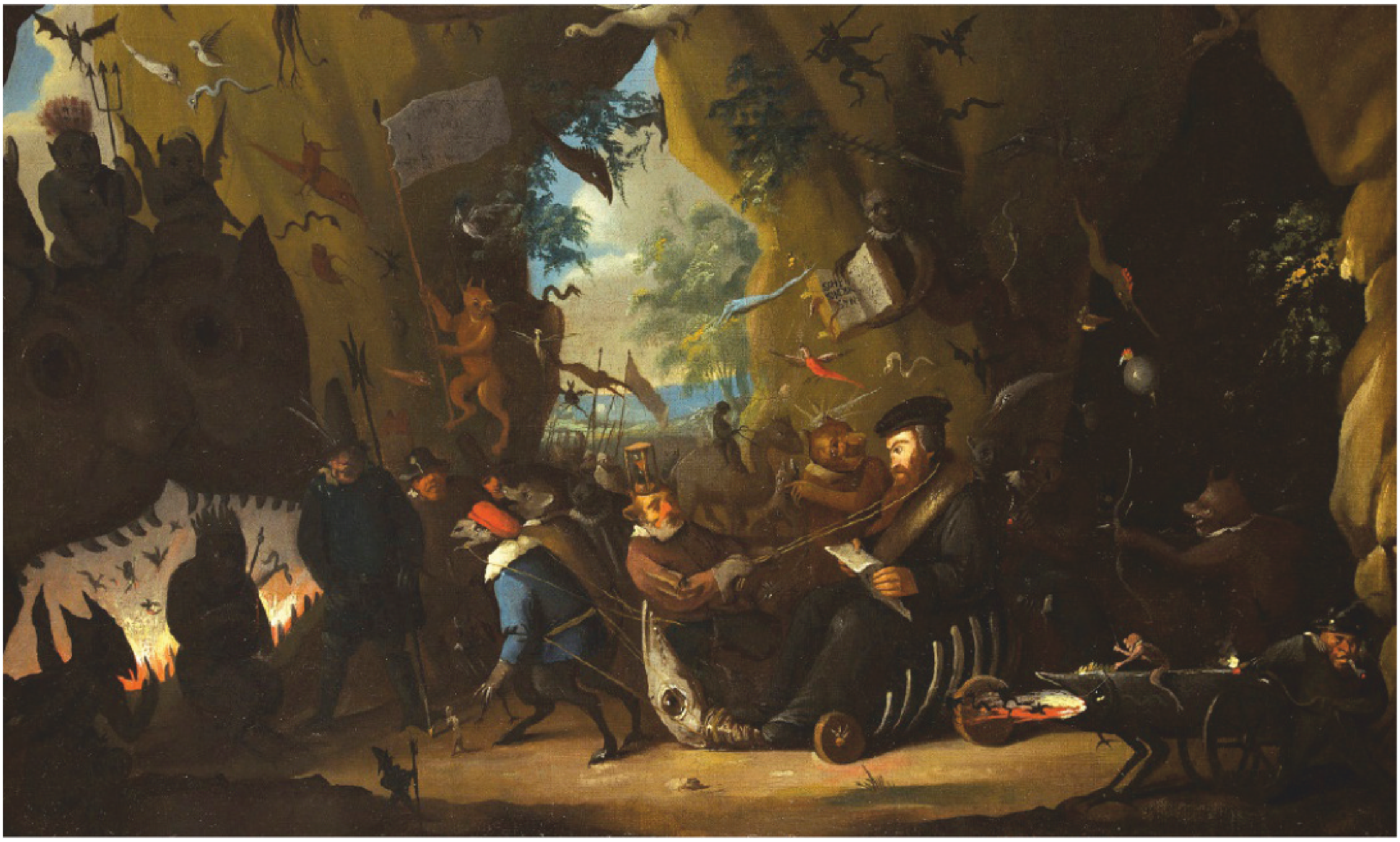
About four years after moving to San Francisco to enter the tech world, Wiener quit her last job there. She managed to escape with a nest egg of about $200,000 after exercising her stock options, around a year after the election of Donald Trump.

The big-picture takeaways of *Uncanny Valley* are compelling, though they are not Wiener's alone: For the last few years, we've seen a cottage industry of books detailing the personal and political effects of surveillance capitalism and tech-world excess. But the literary texture of Wiener's narrative makes it particularly valuable as a primary document of this moment. Her voice, alternating between cool and detached and impassioned and earnest, boasts an observational precision that is devastating. It is whip smart and searingly funny, too. The book contains a six-page tour de force on Internet addiction, algorithms, and all of the attendant feelings of dread that is one of the best summations of an average day online I've ever read.

There is also a powerful and often surprising combination of joy and ambivalence running through Wiener's story. She is careful not to say that all tech is bad, all start-up bros evil, and she marvels at the magic of both understanding and deploying a line of code. She also allows space to those who upend her preconceptions of tech culture, among them her boyfriend Ian, a Google engineer, and Patrick, an erudite young start-up founder she befriends. That Wiener squeezes all of this—along with passages on urban theory, tracts on electronic dance music, and thoughts on contemporary novels—into some 275 pages is quite a feat.

Still, it's impossible to leave this book not feeling drained spiritually and politically, even as its wealth of knowledge helps orient the reader in a world so closely tied to the ups and downs of Bay Area billionaires. Throughout *Uncanny Valley*, there is a sense of crushing defeat. The world that Big Tech has given us feels almost foreordained, with few alternatives to serve as a counterweight to its dominance over the tools that facilitate everyday life. Wiener found her escape route, eventually becoming a writer for *The New Yorker*, where she quickly established herself as a trenchant observer of the tech industry. In this way, one can read *Uncanny Valley* as a *Künstlerroman*, a tale of our heroine returning to her literary ambitions after all. But like a lot of recent books on the hellscape that is the Internet, her personal story gives us little room to imagine how we all might escape this new, malignant, corporate-controlled space, where data collection, advertising, and surveillance are the status quo.

For Wiener, this may be part of her goal. The clarifying anger that infuses her book also points to the larger politics that we will need if we are to make the Internet a more humane gathering place. Breaking up the Silicon Valley monopolies, unionizing their workplaces, and imposing effective new government regulations need to happen to begin fixing the Internet (and the world). Yet while she only briefly engages with the prospect of tech unionization, the entirety of the book is spent grappling with the limits of her coworkers' and her own political imagination in the face of the tools they've created. She shows us all this because she knows something has to change. *Uncanny Valley* may tell the story, from one woman's perspective, of how the tech industry has come close to ruining the world. But Wiener's book is also proof that it hasn't succeeded yet. ■



EGBERT VAN HEEMSKERCK THE YOUNGER, *CALVIN IN HELL*, CIRCA 1700–10 (FINE ART IMAGES / HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES)

CALVINISM'S DISCONTENTS

Does liberalism have its roots in the illiberal upheavals of the English Reformation?

by KEITH THOMAS

"To understand Liberalism, we need to understand early modern Calvinism." This is the central claim made by Harvard professor James Simpson in his idiosyncratic but challenging new book, *Permanent Revolution: The Reformation and the Illiberal Roots of Liberalism*. As its dust jacket proclaims, Simpson means to rewrite the history of liberalism by uncovering "its unexpected debt to evangelical religion." His aim is to show how the English Reformation, so authoritarian in its beginnings, culminated in the "proto-liberal" Glorious Revolution settlement of 1688–89 and led to the English Enlightenment.

The key feature of that settlement, Simpson argues, was the Toleration Act, which gave "ease to scrupulous consciences in the exercise of religion" by allowing Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England freedom of worship and exemption from the penalties previously attached to nonattendance at Anglican services. This exemption was not extended to Roman Catholics, Unitarians, or Jews, and public office continued to be confined to those who worshipped in the Church of England. Many of the legislators saw toleration less as a matter of principle than as an unpleasant necessity, a pragmatic way of avoiding further strife. Nevertheless, Simpson insists that this was a "foundational" moment for "the English liberal tradition." The Toleration Act was accompanied by a Bill of Rights declaring "the rights and liberties of the subject" and was followed by statutory provision for the annual meeting of Parliament, the independence of the judiciary, and qualified freedom of the press.

Whether or not this was the foundational moment of English liberalism, one might also ask in what sense this was all a consequence of Calvinism. The conventional answer is that, by making the vernacular Bible accessible to all, the Protestant reformers encouraged people to think for themselves and claim the right to do so. In addition, their doctrine of the priesthood of all believers generated a belief in human equality and encouraged respect for personal religious experience, private judgment, and individual conscience. Out of this came notions of individuality and human rights.

Many historians of political thought agree that, in this way, liberalism grew out of evangelical religion. Simpson toys with this interpretation in his discussion of the poet John Milton's radical thought, which he suggests was "hammered out of, and bore powerful traces of…illiberal Protestantism." But in every other respect he categorically rejects the notion that the Reformation

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led inexorably to liberalism, describing the idea as unacceptable "Whig triumphalism." He twice quotes Herbert Butterfield's observation in *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) that religious liberty was not the natural product of Protestantism but emerged "painfully and grudgingly… out of the tragedy of the post-Reformation world." Following Butterfield's lead, Simpson argues that the liberal tradition is "the younger sibling of evangelical religion" but that "it derives from Protestantism by repudiating it." Early Protestantism, he asserts, was so "punishingly violent, fissiparous and unsustainable" that it eventually led its adherents to invent a political doctrine "to stabilize cultures after 150 years of psychic and social violence"; the result was "nascent liberalism." Unfortunately, the suggestion that it was not until 1688 that quasi-liberal sentiments were widely voiced in England flies in the face of the evidence. So does the notion that it was only in a religious context that they emerged at all.

Simpson's claim that liberal ideas were a by-product of the Reformation—one unintended by its original makers—is by no means new, though it has never been so relentlessly pursued. Two hundred and thirty years ago, in a little-noticed section of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon observed that the Reformation taught each Christian "to acknowledge no law but the scriptures, no interpreter but his own conscience. This freedom, however, was the consequence, rather than the design, of the Reformation. The patriot reformers were ambitious of succeeding the tyrants whom they had dethroned. They imposed with equal rigour their creeds and confessions; they asserted the right of the magistrate to punish heretics with death." The same point was made by the great liberal historian G.P. Gooch in his 1898 *The History of English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* and by the quasi-Marxist philosopher and social theorist Harold Laski in his 1936 *Rise of European Liberalism*, both of whom argued that liberal ideas were an unintended consequence of the Reformation and thus anathema to its makers. More recently, Berkeley historian Ethan Shagan has maintained that Protestantism was an authoritarian project, not a liberal one, and that the Enlightenment was a reaction against the habits of mind the Reformation had generated. But if that is all that Simpson means by "the illiberal roots of liberalism," one might equally well speak of "the Catholic roots of Protestantism" or "the capitalist roots of Marxism."

Permanent Revolution
The Reformation and the Illiberal Roots of Liberalism
By James Simpson
Belknap Press. 464 pp. $35

Simpson could have made a different and much stronger case for the Protestant origins of liberalism had he not completely passed over (Milton's writings excepted) the astonishing ferment of ideas that erupted between 1642 and 1660, the years of the English Civil War and Interregnum. In a brilliant essay, British historian Blair Worden took this ferment seriously and, as a result, offers a far more sophisticated approach to the question of liberalism's Protestant roots. John Calvin, he notes, maintained that spiritual liberty—by which he meant emancipation from the bondage of sin and complete submission to God's will—is perfectly compatible with the absence of civil liberty. But as Worden points out, this view was rejected in the 1640s by many radical English Protestants, who, faced with Presbyterian intolerance, realized that their spiritual goals could not be attained if they were denied the freedom to practice their religion. Congregationalists, Levellers, and army leaders therefore claimed that liberty of conscience and worship was a "civil right," even though, paradoxically, they thought of it as the right to become God's slaves. They extended the same plea of conscience to include other civil liberties, such as the right to form separatist congregations or to withhold the payment of tithes. By stressing this new kind of Protestant political thought, Worden was able to conclude that it was from within Puritanism, not in reaction to it, that the demand for civil liberty and thus liberalism emerged.

In a valuable recent study, Stanford historian David Como further illuminates the process by which, in the 1640s, liberty of conscience—sometimes even for Jews, Muslims, and atheists—came to be seen by many Protestant separatists in England as a fundamental political right, indivisibly connected to other inviolable civil liberties like freedom of the press, freedom to petition the government, freedom from arbitrary imprisonment, and freedom to vote in parliamentary elections. As the century wore on, he argues, "the theological trappings tended to be clipped away," and these claims were sometimes presented as "the natural Right of Mankind."

Simpson not only misses this emergence of liberal ideas in the 1640s; his preoccupation with Protestantism also leads him to give insufficient space to the many historians of political thought who have pointed to the nontheological origins of liberalism. He recognizes the influence of the humanistic neo-Roman theory of liberty, but he says little about the medieval vogue for natural law theories, though it was from this tradition that the idea of human rights emerged in the 17th century, starting with the universal right to self-preservation postulated by Hugo Grotius and Thomas Hobbes. He also makes only the vaguest reference to the resistance theories formulated by Protestant authors in the reign of the Catholic Mary Tudor, which gave the people both the right and the duty to remove tyrannous or idolatrous rulers. Instead, having explained liberalism as a simple reaction to what preceded it, Simpson devotes most of his book not to charting its rise but to following the illiberal progress of Protestantism over the same period, painting a vivid, indeed passionate, picture of what he sees as its devastating contribution to human unhappiness.

Echoing political theorist Michael Walzer's 1965 *The Revolution of the Saints*, which portrayed Puritanism as a revolutionary ideology and the Puritan saint as the first active, ideologically committed political radical, Simpson identifies Protestantism as a revolutionary movement. His original contribution to this insight is to extend the boundaries of the revolution. He argues that the break with Rome was only the first stage in a state of permanent revolution, as Protestants repeatedly and compulsively repudiated previous forms and generated new ones, only to abandon them in due course for yet another nostrum, eventually clearing the path for a new liberal politics.

This is in many respects a useful way to characterize the shifts from the 1530s to the 1640s, from King Henry VIII's break with Rome to Edward VI's Protestantism, from the Lutheran belief that Jesus Christ was substantially present in the Eucharist to the view of the rite as purely symbolic, from Episcopalianism to Presbyterianism, and from Presbyterianism to sectarianism. Simpson could have found striking corroboration for this process of permanent revolution in the spiritual odysseys of figures like the ex-tailor Laurence Clarkson (1615–1667). Never satisfied with his religious condition, Clarkson moved from the established church to Presbyterianism, which he rejected in turn to become an Independent, then an antinomian, then a Baptist, then a Seeker, then a Ranter, then a white witch, and finally a Muggletonian. This spiritual restlessness is what Simpson calls English Protestantism's "kinetic" process of endless movement, yet it was most intense in the years he puzzlingly neglects. He never even mentions the appearance in the 1650s of the Quakers, whose total rejection of a separate priesthood and formal liturgy took Protestantism to its logical and most revolutionary conclusion.

As a way of characterizing English Protestantism, the concept of permanent revolution, with its suggestion that people move to ever more extreme positions, has its limitations. Indeed, some of the makers of the early Reformation were far more radical than most of those who followed them. The Lollards of the 15th century were closer in their views to the sectaries of the 1640s than they were to the leaders of the Elizabethan church. The early reformer Robert Barnes, who was burned for heresy in 1540, declared that no day was holier than the rest, not even Christmas or Easter, while William Tyndale, the biblical translator martyred in 1536, was a "mortalist" who believed that the soul slept until the general Resurrection. Not until the 1640s were such views publicly ventilated.

One might also question Simpson's insistence that the progress of Protestantism was as relentless as the notion of permanent revolution might suggest. As he admits, it went into reverse in the early 17th century with the rise of Arminianism, which asserted free will against Calvinism's predestination, and with the capture of the Anglican Church by the Laudians, who embraced this new doctrine and introduced elaborate church ceremonial in place of Puritan simplicity. Yet as Simpson rightly notes, it was Arminianism that pointed "most powerfully to the liberal future," since its belief in free will became a necessary precondition for liberalism's attachment to individual liberty.

It is also hard to accept Simpson's claim that Protestantism was more concerned with combating earlier versions of itself than with challenging Catholicism. For all the differences between different brands of evangelicalism, the hatred of "popery" far exceeded the internecine quarrels among Protestants. Catholic priests were classified as traitors by the government in 1585. The Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot were central to Protestant mythology. The fear of Catholic conspiracies played a crucial role in the origins of the English Civil War and was still present after the Restoration. The Great Fire of London in 1666 was blamed on Catholics, the rumored Popish Plot resulted in a major political crisis in 1679, and James II's Catholicism played a large part in his downfall.

Simpson takes a dim view of early Protestantism. He is a specialist in late medieval English literature and, unsurprisingly, is partial to the writers of the 14th and 15th centuries. In an earlier work, he contrasted the rich varieties of genres and sensibilities found in the mystery cycles and the writings of William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Thomas Malory with the centralized uniformity and dreariness of the literature of the early Tudor period. He also remarked on "the profound delusions" of the evangelical theology that took root in this latter era. He regrets the Protestant destruction of medieval sculpture, wall paintings, and stained glass. But his main objection to the evangelical theologians is that they left no room for human agency. Regarding God's arbitrary grace as the sole source of redemption, they denied any possibility of achieving it through a life of good works. The fate of all individuals was predetermined, and there was no certain way of knowing if one was saved. For Simpson, this was an "absolutist, cruel, despair-producing, humanity-belittling, merit-denying, determinist account of salvation," and only through its rejection could liberalism come into its own.

To make his case, Simpson devotes the great bulk of his book to describing what he sees as the five key features of the Calvinist Protestantism that stood in the way of a liberal outcome: despair, hypocrisy, iconoclasm, distrust of performative speech, and biblical literalism. He chooses to demonstrate their regrettable human consequences by drawing most of his evidence from the imaginative literature of the day. Milton, in particular, gets a disproportionate amount of space, presumably because his writings pose the problem of how the poet, born into a culture of Calvinist predestination, came to express proto-liberal sentiments. But as examples of despair and the "vicious psychic torture" of not knowing whether or not one was saved, Simpson also cites Thomas Wyatt's *Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms*

In the Beginning, Run

Ninety days in the dark on your back in chains and you
don't know where you're going. I kept picturing the
grin of the salesman as the sailors loaded us onto the
ship his teeth lit up my nightmare, the lizard on his shoulder
lept to mine and when the delirium hit I would laugh
with him and infect his evil with my blasphemy: joy. Incessant
weeping laughter would break across the hold and this
petrified the devil for long enough to crack the whip.
Quiet sorrow infuriates the criminal who in that silence
loses track of where he ends and I begin. I was watching
his suicide try to occupy my body, fail, and hobble like a
cloaked beggar toward my unattainable soul. When we reached
land they sold my son's organs right in front of me. Cut
him open and fed him to some sickly president who hates
the sun. Counted his teeth, bit into me with them, some funny
love, I laughed and wept less and then more, a living spell cast
on the unconscious. You've got to be serious dumb to eat
someone you've tortured you've got to want to be me
to try this hard you must be starving and I taste like
The Miracles singing "Who's Lovin' You"
and I wonder

HARMONY HOLIDAY

and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He comments on the "Kafkaesque…quality of this theological world, in which despair is simultaneously the surest sign both of election and of damnation."

To illustrate Protestant hypocrisy, Simpson turns to Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and the Puritan Angelo in William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, two obvious examples of the duplicity generated by the Puritan tendency to prescribe humanly impossible standards of godliness. To capture Calvinist iconoclasm, which moved from the destruction of images in churches to proposals that the churches themselves be destroyed and finally to a "psychic iconoclasm" against incorrect imaginings, Simpson cites Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, which portrays mental images as much worse than physical ones.

Next on Simpson's list of evangelical horrors is the Calvinist attack on "performative language," by which he means the attempt to achieve physical effects by words, whether in the ritual of the Catholic Mass or in the curses of supposed witches. He accuses the reformers of inventing (or, alternatively, reinventing) the idea of black magic—a bizarre suggestion, since witch trials were well underway in 15th century Europe: As Simpson himself recognizes, *Malleus Maleficarum*, the notorious treatise providing the rationale for such prosecutions, appeared in 1487 and was the work of a papal inquisitor. He also examines the Calvinist attacks on the theater, culminating in the parliamentary ordinance of 1648 abolishing stage plays. In his desire to give that act an exclusively religious explanation, however, Simpson omits its stress on the "disorders" and "disturbance of the peace" with which the theaters were associated. Instead he cites Milton's virtuous "terrorist" Samson, who pulls down a theater and kills the audience, though he does not remind us that *Samson Agonistes* was itself a play or that the poet's original idea was to make *Paradise Lost* one, too.

Simpson's final theme is the dominance of biblical literalism in evangelical culture. "Every aspect of Church doctrine, governance and practice," he points out, "was potentially vulnerable to being rejected as idolatrous if it did not find justification in a set of texts at least 1,400 years old." The literal reading of such biblical texts as "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10) could, he claims, make scriptural reading "an experience of existential anguish." He cites the paraphrases of Psalms by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, betrayed by his friends and despairingly awaiting execution in 1547, and Bunyan's spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding* (1666), which suggests that the author's persecution by the authorities paled to nothing when compared with the way that the biblical text persecuted him as a reader. Returning to his favorite analogy, Simpson remarks that we must look to Kafka to find anything remotely comparable.

Throughout his account of Calvinism and its discontents, Simpson's sympathies lie with the era's anti-literalists, notably Shakespeare, whose Shylock, insisting on the letter of his bond, resembles less the Jews than the Puritan divines "in their eager readiness to inflict the arbitrary, inhuman literal sense on their fellow Christians." He admires Milton as another anti-literalist who invoked intention and context in order to produce a self-interested, nonliteral reinterpretation of Christ's pronouncement on divorce and whose *Paradise Lost* bears only the most skeletal relationship to the words of Genesis.

Simpson's study of English Calvinism leaves the reader with a deeply depressing and somewhat overheated view of evangelical religion in the period, which he calls a "state-sponsored cultural extremity of a singular, soul-crushing and violence-producing kind." If he had gone beyond his chosen literary sources, he could easily have matched his examples of despairing evangelicals with an equal or perhaps even larger list of readers who claimed to have derived real comfort from the Scriptures. Personal temperament did as much as religious allegiance to determine whether an individual emerged from reading the Bible cheered or depressed. He concedes as much when he remarks that Bunyan "clearly manifests the symptoms of chronic depression." Simpson would also have found that many ordinary Protestant clergy were surprisingly tolerant of their unregenerate parishioners' belief that they could earn salvation by their own efforts.

Despite what he sees as its horrors, Simpson concludes that Calvinist theology was "by far the most powerful expression of early European revolutionary modernity." It paralleled the administrative centralization carried out by Tudor monarchs by portraying God as invested with "massively concentrated" executive powers "at the center of a purified, utterly homogeneous True Church of the Elect." In due course, the unsustainable violence of the Calvinist revolution produced "the great counter narrative of modernity," namely the decentralization of theological and political power and the shift to a more liberal order.

Permanent Revolution is a rich work, abounding in challenging assertions and acute aperçus, but at times it is also an infuriating one to read. Simpson's sentences can be convoluted; he employs arcane neologisms like "dramicide" and is capable of making statements like "liberal modernity retrojected its abject onto premodernity." His text is marred by repetitions, careless proofreading, and some embarrassing factual errors. Yet he is extremely well read in modern historical writing as well as early modern literature, and his argument is punctuated by many original insights.

At the end of the book, Simpson returns to his opening theme of "the liberal tradition," its origins, and its future. Here he encounters an obvious problem: No one in the 17th century gave the word "liberal" a political meaning, and the concept of liberalism as a political ideology did not appear until the second decade of the 19th century. So the early modern "liberalism" of Simpson's book is liberalism avant la lettre. When the concept did appear in the early 19th century, it was rapidly appropriated by politicians of very different hues, as historian Helena Rosenblatt brilliantly demonstrated in her 2018 *The Lost History of Liberalism*. Yet Simpson uses the word unselfconsciously, as if this notoriously elusive term had only one meaning. Writing as "a committed liberal," he defines the tenets of modern liberalism as he sees them. They include the separation of church and state, equality before the law, toleration for minorities, freedom of association, liberty and privacy of conscience, and acceptance of the democratic judgment of the majority. (He does not say whether in the American context this means a majority of voters or a majority of states.) But this is essentially a version of what political philosophers call "classical liberalism," the kind inaugurated by John Locke.

Simpson does not seem to recognize that liberalism since the 1680s has taken many different forms, according to who or what is perceived as liberty's enemy, and therefore cannot be so narrowly defined. There is the economic liberalism of Adam Smith, whose attack on protectionist legislation and belief in the efficacy of the free market has been resurrected in modern times in an exaggerated form by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, and there are the "new liberals" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who drew inspiration from John Stuart Mill, T.H. Green, and L.T. Hobhouse and whose central aim was to diminish the social and economic constraints on the personal freedom of the population at large by having the state intervene in the market. In the United States today, all the major political groupings, from Republicans to communitarians, make an appeal to liberty, though they give it very different meanings.

Although Simpson recognizes the slipperiness of the concept, he sticks to his own ahistorical definition of liberalism. His final verdict is that liberalism is an essential guardian of our freedom but that it is currently "in global retreat before evangelical religion"—no longer Protestant this time but manifested in the rise of "populist religious forces" in India, Algeria, Israel, and Turkey. Liberalism, he warns, has serious weaknesses. It can be ineffective, as in the United States, the "land of the free" but also "the nation with by far the world's highest gross and per capita prison population." Like the Puritan elect, liberals can be "intolerant," "virtue-parading," "exclusivist," and "identitarian." They, too, are subject to the logic of permanent revolution, for there is always a new cause that directs their energies away from the classical liberalism that Simpson regards as their core commitment.

However, liberals' greatest mistake, he insists, is to regard liberalism as a "worldview" that, like Christianity or Marxism, can offer a guide to salvation. In his opinion, liberalism is merely a second-order belief system, designed to preserve a plurality of worldviews by reminding their holders of the constitutional proprieties they should observe when pursuing their goals. Just as early Protestantism caused so much pain by extending its all-embracing tentacles into domains unconnected with spirituality, so liberalism exceeds its brief when it attempts to reshape the world on what Simpson describes as the "shallow" grounds of abstract, universalist human rights as a set of absolute virtues, and he sees it as particularly odious in its "more recent, militantly secularist form."

Implicit in this argument seems to be the notion that, provided all the world's different cultures and religions tolerate minorities and observe democratic constraints, they should be respected, however much their cultural practices might pose threats to liberal values. This would not have persuaded the late philosopher Richard Rorty, who held that "some cultures, like some people, are no damn good: they cause too much pain and so have to be resisted." Which of these views, one wonders, is the more "liberal" one? ■

ADÈLE HAENEL (COURTESY OF NEON)

HER GAZE

Céline Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*

by KRISTEN YOONSOO KIM

What is it about blondes that make them seem so… doomed? Consider Kim Novak's golden spiral of a bun in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) as her character, Madeleine, gazes at a painting that eerily resembles her while a private detective (James Stewart) tails her around San Francisco—a job that soon turns into his personal obsession. Or the cream blonde (Angie Dickinson) in Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980), who sits on a museum bench before engaging in mutual flirt-stalking with a stranger—a decision that will lead to her violent death the next day. (De Palma famously intended the scene as an homage to Hitchcock.)

The first time we meet Héloïse (Adèle Haenel) in Céline Sciamma's new film *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, we see only the back of her head—a messy blond bun—before she sprints toward the edge of a cliff, calling to mind Madeleine's plunge into San Francisco Bay early in *Vertigo*. Héloïse does not jump, though it's a legitimate concern: Her older sister has recently fallen from that very cliff (an act suspected to be suicide), and Héloïse has inherited her arranged marriage to a wealthy Milanese man she's never met and knows nothing about. The period is late-18th-century France, when marriage proposals were still arranged and finalized via painted portraits (this was pre-Tinder, after all) delivered to potential suitors. But the stubborn Héloïse refuses to sit for such a portrait, leading her mother to hire an artist, Marianne (Noémie Merlant), under the guise of a walking companion to watch after Héloïse in the wake of her sister's death. Marianne is instructed to observe the rebellious lady by day and paint her from memory at night. Héloïse, though she has no reason to study Marianne, returns her attention with equal ardor.

The differences between the two wom-

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en can be read in these gazes, and they are considerable. While Héloïse's is all wide-eyed and inquisitive, Marianne's is piercing. Hers is a gaze familiar to stories about repressed lesbian lovers and for this reason has much more intensity, as it is a stare doing double duty. You might think at first of Todd Haynes's *Carol*, all read-between-the-lines looks. But Marianne's gaze has another layer to it: the scrutiny of a painter. Is her intense observation that of someone falling in love or of an artist simply doing her job? Even when we know the answer (technically, it's both) the ambiguity adds a level of scintillating pleasure. In a brief conversation with Merlant, she told me that rather than getting trained in painting for the film, she spent much of her time preparing by trying to nail that very look, to convey how an artist observes her subject. The casting here is on point. Merlant is an actress whose eyes are especially striking. With her gaze, Marianne not only returns Héloïse's curiosity but also commits to memory their time together—brief but never to be forgotten.

P*ortrait of a Lady on Fire* is a film that not only mostly eliminates the male gaze (it was shot by a woman cinematographer, Claire Mathon) but also reduces its male roles to just a few lines. When a man shows up by the end of the film and speaks, it is hilariously jarring. Whether the Hitchcockian blond damsel reference is intentional, Sciamma's direction is decidedly different from Hitchcock's; her protagonists' tragedy doesn't involve death and doppelgängers but is suffered in private—often a very feminine fate. There's also a narrative metaphor that runs through the film, of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. The characters in *Portrait* discuss how Orpheus looks back, consigning his lover to eternity in the underworld. "But why did he turn around?" they ask, and Héloïse suggests that maybe Eurydice called out to him, dooming herself with the final image of her love. It is a far more romantic point of view than the norm, an interpretation that actually accounts for Eurydice's feelings on the matter, and the inclusion of this myth helps to give autonomy to the female characters. This motif appears in *Portrait* a few more times, most notably when Marianne, prompted by Héloïse, turns around as they say goodbye. By overlaying a seemingly standard farewell scene with such a dramatic life-or-death moment, *Portrait* weights their parting with the grandness of tragedy.

Marianne's artistic observations eventually meld with her personal desires, and after her first attempt at painting a portrait of Héloïse, Marianne destroys the perfectly serviceable result. Was she dissatisfied with it as an artist? Was she offended that Héloïse wasn't flattered by the depiction? Or did she simply want to buy more time with her subject? Again, the answer is easy enough to discern (a combination of all three), but the story is once more served by keeping the motives ambiguous. Héloïse, to the surprise of both Marianne and the viewer, agrees to sit for a portrait, and during these sessions the pair's feelings for each other rise to the surface, sealed with a saliva-stringed kiss.

What follows is a few days' bliss while Héloïse's mother is out of town. The two are no longer repressing their passion for each other but rather the reality of a near future in which Héloïse will be married to someone else. Something wonderful happens in the privacy of a space in which these two young women are left unattended, as social structures and heterosexual norms begin to crumble. Héloïse and Marianne help Sophie (Luàna Bajrami), the maid, with her abortion; the three attend a witchy bonfire (it's here that the lady in question titularly combusts); and the lovers experience a moment of psychedelic-induced liberation.

Portrait of a Lady on Fire's story is quite simple, but it brims with desire. Sciamma could have relied on the strength of that alone. But at times the film falters, with overdetermined, almost corny visual choices. I don't mean the literal interpretation of the lady on fire (however you may feel about that) or Marianne's anachronistic painting style (which features rather modernist brushwork), though the film can at times veer into the unintentionally comic. One scene in particular is burned into my brain: the lady lying naked with a circular mirror placed over her, um, lady parts and Marianne's face reflected in it.

The film returns to form at the end and brings us back to the bare-bones emotion that made it so resonant in the first place. Marianne spots Héloïse one final time at a concert hall during a performance of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, music that she had played for Héloïse. Marianne had performed it on a harpsichord, sparsely and imperfectly but affectingly. This time, the music is lush and performed by professional musicians, but it only underscores the emptiness she feels as a result of their separation. Marianne's gaze remains piercing, but Héloïse, unlike Orpheus, does not look back to see her sitting so close by. And unlike Eurydice, both lovers here live on. ■

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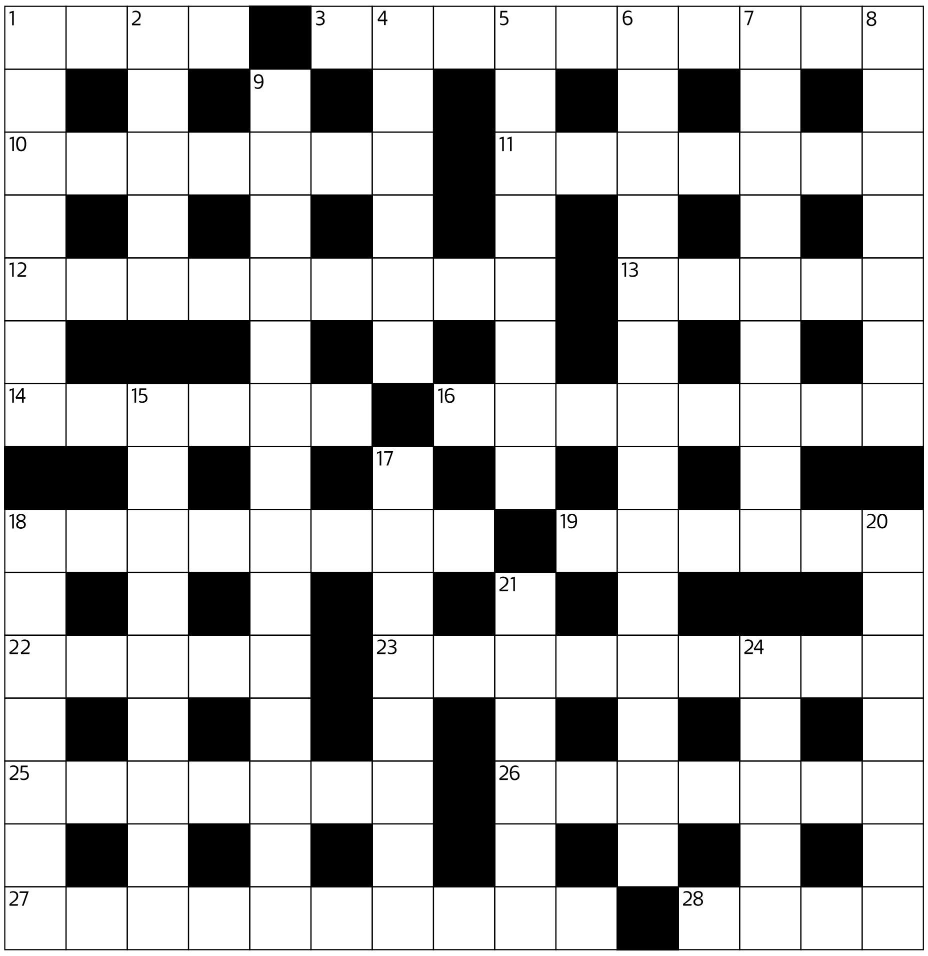
Puzzle No. 3522

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



ACROSS

1 Passport notation's a tautology if its first part is flipped, with a line across the middle (4)

3 Greedy slug, not out wandering (10)

10 Link South American custom (7)

11 Contradicts judge before residents of the Rockies (7)

12 Refashion litter to cheer Cleopatra, e.g. (5,4)

13 Gag: I agree to appear in a common T-shirt image (5)

14 In retrospect, felt revulsion about onset of complete disconnect (6)

16 Deep and vibrant tirade involving crazy ones (8)

18 Jewish prayer service I'd note east of German city (3,5)

19 This character-promoting chicken lacks energy (6)

22 Like some bulls in Pennsylvania, buddy (5)

23 In retreat, uniformed students grabbing instrument for IRS employee (9)

25 Monarch totaled Nazi car (7)

26 Like a G-sharp originally—happening in advance of Brahms's Fourth (7)

27 Draw around black horse lodged nearby (10)

28 Loud bird! (4)

DOWN

1 Came by and competed to captivate model (7)

2 Shock over finale of most impressive trick (5)

4 Two things an untrustworthy cow will do to avoid being seen (3,3)

5 Unusually great partner for Bill is singled out (8)

6 Earl of Coventry's stinky smell detector (9,5)

7 Healer's vow to accommodate rising artists (9)

8 Cups set randomly for criminal, possibly (7)

9 Relax thanks to actor Stacy, the source of peace amid tribulations (4,1,5,4)

15 Ring Eloise's home where you might stop on the freeway (4,5)

17 State of company: upset over mail mix-up (8)

18 Knockout kisses in Russian capital (7)

20 Pro-choice group conveys weight and height for animal (7)

21 Ready electric vehicle in reverse, carrying last drop of fuel (3,3)

24 Sidekick found in Washington town (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3521

ACROSS **1** A(LEX + AND)RIA **6** hidden **9** "guys" **10** PA(INTER + L)Y **12** E(Z)RA **13** anag. **15** rebus **17** "sphere" phonetic rev. **19** R + ERUN (anag.) **21** D IS C OVER Y **23** TAPES + TRIES **25** "key we" **27** B(L + INDF)OLD (*find* anag.) **28** TOO + T[oug]H **29** EX + AM **30** anag.

DOWN **1** anag. (&lit.) **2** ERIT (rev.) + REA[l] **3** A + MEN **4** DE + POT (rev.) **5** hidden **7** "force ale" **8** WA(Y)NE **11** TATER (anag.) + TOT **14** RED(N)OSED **16** OR + DERF(O)RM (rev.) **18** STY + LI(SH)LY **20** anag. **22** EPIS (anag.) + ODE **23** T + ABLE (rev.) **24** 2 defs. **26** alternate letters

A	L	E	X	A	N	D	R	I	A		A	F	E	W
G		R		M		E		N				O		A
G	U	I	S	E		P	A	I	N	T	E	R	L	Y
R		T		N		O		T		A		S		N
E	Z	R	A		S	T	R	I	P	T	E	A	S	E
S		E		R				A		E		L		
S	P	A	C	E	S	O	U	T		R	E	E	F	S
O				D		R		E		T				T
R	E	R	U	N		D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y
		E		O		E				T		P		L
T	A	P	E	S	T	R	I	E	S		K	I	W	I
A		L		E		F		L		E		S		S
B	L	I	N	D	F	O	L	D		T	O	O	T	H
L		C				R		E		U		D		L
E	X	A	M		E	M	B	R	O	I	D	E	R	Y

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published 34 times a year (four issues in March, April, and October; three issues in January, February, July, and November; and two issues in May, June, August, September, and December) by The Nation Company, LLC © 2020 in the USA by The Nation Company, LLC, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10018; (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002; (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address, and all subscription inquiries: *The Nation*, PO Box 8505 Big Sandy, TX 75755-8505; or call 1-800-333-8536. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement No. 40612608. When ordering a subscription, please allow four to six weeks for receipt of first issue and for all subscription transactions. Basic annual subscription price: $69 for one year. Back issues, $6 prepaid ($8 foreign) from: *The Nation*, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10018. If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. *The Nation* is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Alliance for Audited Media. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Nation*, PO Box 8505 Big Sandy, TX 75755-8505. Printed in the USA.

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>
> —Claudia Sole, Calif.

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